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*Cristina Castilla Cid**

The Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies. Critical thought on its strengths and weaknesses

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The Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies. Critical thought on its strengths and weaknesses

Abstract:

The Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies (IEEE) is a think tank associated with the Ministry of Defence and committed to research and dissemination of culture of security and defence. Given its established relevance on the security arena, both civilian and military, this analysis proposes a theoretical reflection on how the Institute operates in the political, social and academic scenario, as well as the implications of acknowledging certain theoretical elements, which consequently will influence the public opinion views on the risks and threats to national security and defence. Finally, some elements of the critical security studies will allow us to propose a series of weaknesses and strengths in order to recommend future research lines that stimulate the debate.

Keywords:

Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies, strategic studies, critical security studies, security, human security.

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***NOTE:** The ideas contained in the Opinion Papers shall be responsibility of their authors, without necessarily reflecting the thinking of the IEEE or the Ministry of Defense.

Introduction

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies (hereinafter, IEEEE). As a result of its track record, today it is considered a precious space for reflection —both for the military community and for the civilian population— on the set of issues related to defence and security. Hence, the Institute has become the Spanish think tank par excellence in strategic and security studies; and it is at the frontline of the debate on any emerging event with a relevant security implication.

This anniversary is an opportunity to appreciate the work of the institution and its distinctive features. The aim is to observe the external context where the Institute operates, as well as its internal characteristics, in order to identify the narrative framework from which it develops a large part of its research activity and disseminates the culture of security and defence. Furthermore, a critical analysis will allow us to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of its discursive logic, while, at the same time, it reveals the impact of its narrative on the Spanish public's perception of national security and defence.

The raised objective is undeniably complex. Firstly, both the size of the institution and the multiplicity of factors to be taken into account, within the limited length of this document, make it necessary to consider this analysis only as an initial approximation to what it could be a detailed study of the IEEEE's narrative, which is deemed worthy.

Secondly, this dissertation could be approached from multiple knowledge areas. In this case, International Relations theories are a valuable analytical framework¹ for this purpose. On the one hand, the strong multidisciplinary character of this academic discipline —which has been influenced since its appearance by others such as History, Anthropology, Politics and Economics²—, facilitates to integrate the analysis of the political, economic and cultural factors of our society, such as security and defense.

¹ PEÑAS ESTEBAN, Francisco Javier. “¿Es posible una teoría de Relaciones Internacionales?”, *Relaciones Internacionales*, (1):1-32, March 2005, p. 4. Available at: <https://revistas.uam.es/index.php/relacionesinternacionales/article/view/4826/5295> Date consulted: 19/04/2020.

² Ibid., pp. 4-5.

On the other hand, the relationship between strategic studies and international relations is clear³, particularly regarding international security studies⁴. In this sense, the post-positivist paradigm⁵ proposes an alternative framework for interpretation, different from the dominant narratives in the discipline. From a reflective point of view, these theories seek to understand the influence of both knowledge and language in the configuration of social reality⁶. Therefore, the critical schools of security in Europe will serve as an inspiration to consider possible strengths and weaknesses of the institution. Especially, the postulates of the Copenhagen and Paris schools will be considered, as well as some general reflections that feminist security studies bring to critical theory⁷.

It should be emphasized that, as Alberto Lozano points out, theories are a device «that makes it possible to simplify the reality and to decide which elements matter and which do not»⁸. As this essay is a theoretical reflection, it takes a certain ontological and epistemological approach that will hide some elements. For instance, articles published

³ PARENTE RODRÍGUEZ, Gonzalo. “Los estudios estratégicos en España”, *Boletín de Información del Ministerio de Defensa Español*, (306):7-14, 2008, p. 8. Available at: <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=3345679>. Date consulted: 19/04/2020.

⁴ BUENO, Alberto. “De los estudios estratégicos. Conceptualización y evolución de un campo de estudio”, *Revista de Estudios en Seguridad Internacional*, 4(1): 237-256, 2018. Available at: <http://www.seguridadinternacional.es/revista/?q=content/de-los-estudios-estrat%C3%A9gicos-conceptualizaci%C3%B3n-y-evoluci%C3%B3n-de-un-campo-de-estudio>. Date consulted: 19/04/2020.

⁵ The positivist paradigm encompasses the traditional approaches in International Relations: realism, liberalism, international society, and international political economy. In contrast, alternative theories emerged after the end of the Cold War and questioned that dominant approach. These voices are known as post-positivists. Vid. JACKSON, Robert et al. “International Relations as an academic subject”. On their: *Introduction to International Relations, theories, and approaches*. United Kingdom, Oxford University Press, 2019, pp. 33-65.

⁶ SANAHUJA, José Antonio. “Reflexividad, emancipación y universalismo: cartografías de la teoría de las Relaciones Internacionales”, *Revista Española de Derecho Internacional*, 70(2): 101-125, July-December 2018, p. 108. Available at: <http://www.revista-redi.es/es/articulos/reflexividad-emancipacion-y-universalismo-cartografias-de-la-teoria-de-las-relaciones-internacionales/>. Date consulted: 19/04/2020.

⁷ In other words, the perspective of critical security studies offers an interpretation of the hypothesis raised that, even though it is not universal, it is, as José Antonio Sanahuja says, based on constitutive theory and a reflectivist and anti-foundationalist epistemology. SANAHUJA, José Antonio. “Reflexividad, emancipación y universalismo...”, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 106-108.

⁸ LOZANO VAZQUEZ, Alberto. “Aspectos ontológicos y epistemológicos en las Relaciones Internacionales: breves propuestas de abordajes teóricos”, *Revista Mexicana de Análisis Político y Administración Pública*, 5(1):41-60, January-June 2016, p. 45. Available at: <http://www.remap.ugto.mx/index.php/remap/article/view/163>. Date consulted: 19/04/2020. Author's translation from the original in Spanish.

by individual authors are a fundamental part of the Institute's work, but for the purposes of this analysis, preference will be given to the interpretation of Strategy Papers, Strategic Panoramas and Geopolitical Overview of Conflicts that the IEEE periodically publishes and considers cardinal in the achievement of its objectives. In this regard, far from pigeonhole the global narrative of the Institute in a single theoretical paradigm, because articles and papers that move away from these statements would have been ignored, the aim is to identify those general features that might encourage thinking about a prevalent narrative within the Institute.

Within these parameters, the external context where the institution operates will be addressed. This will provide us the basis for a general description of the IEEE with special emphasis on the main lines of action of the Institute and its distinctive characteristics. Then, the theoretical contextualization of the strategic studies will allow us to foresee the impression transmitted by the Institute when addressing the issues of security and defence. All this will be the basis for determining its greatest strengths and weaknesses. As a conclusion, the overall analysis of these sections will support a final assessment of the Institute's narrative⁹.

Context and characteristics of the IEEE

The set of characteristics that define the scenario of action of a centre of thought substantially influences the very development of its work. First of all, it is essential to determine the normative and institutional context in which the IEEE operates. Secondly to describe the origin, mission, organizational structure, and main activities of the Institute. Finally, to conclude with its specific features that differentiate it from other centres of strategic analysis, that also address issues of security and defence.

⁹ This article is based on the author's Final Project for the Master's Degree in International Relations and African Studies at the Autonomous University of Madrid (UAM), delivered on 3rd September 2019 and presented on 9th September of the same year, after completing her internship at the Spanish Institute of Strategic Studies during the 2018-2019 academic year and under the supervision of the then Lieutenant Colonel Jesús Díez Alcalde.

IEEE regulatory and institutional context

In Spain, security is considered —along with justice and freedom— one of the fundamental pillars of the rule of law¹⁰. Specifically, the 1978 Constitution recognizes in its article 8 that the mission of the Armed Forces is to «guarantee the sovereignty and independence of Spain and to defend its territorial integrity and the constitutional order»¹¹. According to the National Defence Directive 2012, national security is an «inalienable, non-transferable and unrenounceable»¹² obligation of the State and the institutional defence system, which «contributes in a singular manner to national security»¹³ is mainly developed in the military sphere.

In this line, the Organic Law 5/2005, of 17th November, on National Defence in its article 31 attributes the function to the Ministry of promoting «the development of the culture of defence for the Spanish society to learn, appreciate and get identified, with her history and with the solidarity efforts and effectiveness by which the armed forces protect national interests»¹⁴. In other words, under the premise that defence is a matter that concerns both the military institution and the civilian population as a whole, the government argues that the effectiveness of security and defence as a political instrument depends on social involvement in recognising the threats and risks that besiege Spain, as well as on the role of the Armed Forces in overcoming such dangers.

In this context, the Spanish Institute of Strategic Studies was born out of the need to promote social awareness on security and defence in Spain. Currently, the Order DEF/1887/2015, develops the basic organization of the Defence Staff and establishes that the think tank is dependent on the Higher Centre for Advanced National Defence Studies (CESEDEN) —which in turn is organically framed in the Armed Forces General Staff— and functionally dependent on the General Secretariat of Defence Policy (SEGENPOL) for all matters related to the dissemination of information¹⁵.

¹⁰ Spanish Constitution, preamble. Official State Gazette.

¹¹ Ibid, art. 8.

¹² Presidency of the Government. National Defence Directive 1/2012, for a necessary and responsible defence, 2012, p. 2.

¹³ Ibidem.

¹⁴ Organic Law 5/2005, 17th November 2005, of National Defence, article 31. Head of State, BOE, 18th November 2005. Author's translation from the original in Spanish.

¹⁵ Order DEF/1887/2015, 16th September, develops the basic organization of the Armed Forces General

IEEE Description

The IEEE was founded in 1970, at the beginning of the democratic transition process in Spain, in the words of Olivier Urrutia as «the first structure dedicated to research in defence matters»¹⁶. According to this author, the role of Spanish think tanks during the Franco regime was marked by the centralization and control of dictatorial power¹⁷, so the Institute was embedded in that very dynamic. However, Pedro Bernal explains how the constitution of a social State based on the rule of law required the reinvention of the Armed Forces, mainly characterized by the dissemination of the culture of defence¹⁸.

At present, and as stated in the Ministerial Order DEF/166/2015, the Institute has the responsibility to develop «activities that investigate issues related to defence and security and that promote society's interest in these matters in order to contribute towards the promotion and dissemination of the culture of defence»¹⁹. Thus, its activities have two main objectives: research and dissemination, with the final purpose of promoting defence and security culture. In this sense, the organic structure of the Institute is, broadly speaking, as follows: the Direction, the personal secretariat of the Director, the Technical Secretariat, the Research and Analysis area, the Dissemination and Publication area, the Administrative and Technical Support area and, finally, the Communications Team. In order to develop the aforementioned activities, the IEEE relies on 11 analysts, although many other external researchers —known as «external collaborators»— participate in this centre of strategic studies, thus promoting actively the collaboration of the academic community, with the purpose of becoming «the Institute of all» in Spain.

Staff, art. 4.e). Ministry of Defence, *BOE*, 18th September 2015.

¹⁶ URRUTIA, Olivier. *El papel de los think tanks en la definición y aplicación de las políticas y estrategias de defensa*, Revista del Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos, (2):189-222, 2013, p. 206. Available at: <http://revista.ieee.es/article/view/340> Date consulted: 19/04/2020. Author's translation from the original in Spanish.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 205.

¹⁸ BERNAL GUTIÉRREZ, Pedro. *La cultura de seguridad y defensa en España. Sus orígenes y evolución*, Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos. La Cultura de Seguridad y Defensa, un proyecto en marcha. Cuadernos de estrategia, (155):23-64, 2011, pp. 39-44. Available at: http://www.ieee.es/publicaciones-new/cuadernos-de-estrategia/2011/Cuaderno_155.html Date consulted: 19/04/2020.

¹⁹ Order DEF/166/2015, 21st January, develops the basic organization of the Armed Forces, article 12.3, Ministry of Defence, *BOE*, 10th February 2015. Author's translation from the original in Spanish.

Its dissemination mandate includes a wide range of activities. First, the publication of articles related to international peace and security. Second, its participation in international forums dedicated to the subject under discussion, as well as its close collaboration with institutions with a similar purpose²⁰. For example, as Gonzalo Parente points out, it is worth highlighting its relationship with organizations alike, such as the Centre for Higher Military Studies in Paris or the Institute for Intercontinental Cooperation, as well as the participation of IEEE members in conferences organized by leading think tanks in the United Kingdom, France²¹, Chile or Peru, among many other countries²². In addition, the Institute collaborates with —inter alia— the International Peace Support Training Centre in Kenya and the pan-African platform African Arguments²³. In this area, the Institute has numerous agreements of importance with international centres of strategic studies.

Finally, the dissemination of the security and defence culture is also developed through the cooperation between the IEEE and the national education system. In 2011, Bernal explained that the partnership with primary, secondary and high school has not proved to be remarkable despite the fact that «it is at the earliest stages of youth where the values and habits of future generations begin to take shape»²⁴. Since 2013, the Institute's activity in this field has been much more significant. In addition, it should be noted that the Institute has a large space on its website for teachers and students, which provides educational resources for the promotion of peace and security culture²⁵.

It is within the field of university education that the Institute develops a greater level of collaboration. According to the aforementioned author, between 2001 and 2011 this

²⁰ Online. IEEE. *Qué es el IEEE*. Available at: <http://www.ieee.es/quienes-somos/que-es-ieee/> Date consulted: 19/04/2020.

²¹ PARENTE RODRÍGUEZ, Gonzalo. “Los estudios estratégicos...”, Op. Cit., p. 11.

²² To better illustrate the relationship of the IEEE with other national think tanks and similar institutions, we can mention, among others, the Instituto Universitario Gutiérrez Mellado, the Elcano Royal Institute and the Instituto Choiseul España. At the international level, it collaborates with the Instituto Superior para la Defensa (INSUDE) in the Dominican Republic, the Academia Nacional de Estudios Políticos y Estratégicos (ANEPE) in Chile, the Centro de Estudios Estratégicos del Perú (CEEP) and the Institut de Recherche Stratégique de l'Ecole Militaire (IRSEM) in France, among others.

²³ See Appendix.

²⁴ BERNAL GUTIÉRREZ, Pedro. “La cultura de seguridad y defensa en España...”, Op. Cit., p. 56. Author's translation from the original in Spanish.

²⁵ Online. IEEE. *Espacio educativo*. Available at: <http://www.ieee.es/espacio-educativo/>. Date consulted: 19/04/2020.

think tank progressively signed agreements with 29 universities, covering a range of activities in both undergraduate and graduate studies and doctoral programs²⁶. At the moment, the IEEE works on various activities related to security and defence with the Technical University in Madrid, the Rey Juan Carlos University, the León University and the Complutense University in Madrid, although the number of these agreements is expected to increase considerably this year. Furthermore, one of the main contributions of the Institute is the educational cooperation agreements, which are programs that allow university students to enjoy a period of internship at the heart of the Institution, so that they can actively and directly collaborate in the dissemination of the culture of defence²⁷. Lastly, among the material spaces for reflection and debate promoted by the IEEE, it is worth highlighting its collaboration in summer courses with the Complutense University in Madrid and the Technical University in Madrid, as well as others²⁸.

In relation to the research activity, and under the assumption that there is no closed organizational structure for it, the research team articulates its work based on two criteria: geographical regions and cross-cutting topics. On the one hand, the IEEE differentiates seven geographical regions: Africa, the Americas, Antarctica-Arctic, Asia-Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, Russia, and the Caucasus. On the other hand, 11 cross-cutting topics are addressed in each region: international terrorism, non-proliferation, climate change, intelligence, energy, culture of security and defence, women, children, gender and conflict, security and defence, cybersecurity, armed conflicts and sociological studies.

While there is also no exclusive assignment of analysts to a particular area or theme, it is quite clear that they may be committed to the development of research around specific geopolitical regions. As an example, the answers given in the attached interview confirm this perception. One of the questions asked was whether the Institute should devote more space to Africa: at least three analysts deal with security and

²⁶ BERNAL GUTIÉRREZ, Pedro. "La cultura de seguridad y defensa en España...", Op. Cit., p. 55.

²⁷ Among the universities that have signed an educational cooperation agreement with the IEEE we should mention the University of Deusto, the Autonomous University of Madrid and the Schiller University. Similarly, the number of these agreements is expected to increase considerably this year.

²⁸ Online. IEEE. Cursos de Verano. Available at: <http://www.ieeee.es/actividades/cursos-verano/>. Date consulted: 19/04/2020.

defence issues relating to this continent²⁹. This figure must be analysed in relation to the total of 11 analysts that make up the official structure of the IEEEE, which means that around the 30 percent of the available human resources are dedicated to the study of the African continent. Besides, it is important to add the numerous contributions from external collaborators with respect to the African reality.

IEEEE Distinctive Features

Based on the above, it may be concluded that the IEEEE is a think tank associated with the Spanish Ministry of Defence dedicated to strategic studies, specifically to the investigation and dissemination of security and defence culture. It is therefore appropriate to highlight three key dimensions of the Institute, which are represented in its governmental, communicative, and academic aspects.

Despite the ambiguity in defining what a think tank is, and what its characteristics and functions are³⁰, it is commonly accepted by the academic community that these centres of thought have the capacity to influence the configuration of public policies. In Urrutia's words, «the benefit to a State, a company or an army of having think tanks lies in the possibility of obtaining supplies of information, knowledge and innovation»³¹. Whether as an independent actor³² or as a strategic tool³³, they offer expert insight into the issues that trigger public debate and that may require potential national decision-making³⁴. In this case, the legitimacy of the Institute to guide or serve as an orientation in the adoption of security and national defence measures is based on its integration in the organic structure of the Ministry of Defence.

²⁹ See Appendix.

³⁰ URRUTIA, Olivier. "El papel de los think tanks...", Op. Cit., pp. 193-194. XIFRA, Jordi. "Los think tank y advocacy tank como actores de la comunicación política", *Anàlisi: quaderns de comunicació i cultura*, (32): 73-91, 2005, pp. 74-78. Available at: <https://ddd.uab.cat/record/5412> Date consulted: 19/04/2020.

³¹ URRUTIA, Olivier. "El papel de los think tanks...", Op. Cit., p. 196. Author's translation from the original in Spanish.

³² GEO, Saura. "Think tanks y educación. Neoliberalismo de FAES en la LOMCE", *Archivos Analíticos de Políticas Educativas*, 23(107):1-19, 2015, p. 3. Available at: <https://epaa.asu.edu/ojs/article/view/2106> Date consulted: 19/04/2020.

³³ URRUTIA, Olivier. "El papel de los think tanks...", Op. Cit., p. 196.

³⁴ This is what Urrutia defines as an expertise function. URRUTIA, Olivier. "El papel de los think tanks...", Op. Cit., p. 191. However, the truth is that the influence of think tanks in Spain is still in an early stage. GEO, Saura. "Think tanks y educación...", Op. Cit., p. 5.

Moreover, the IEEEE focuses on the public's perception of the Armed Forces and Defence. This is because, as Jordi Marsal states, the culture of security and defence «depends on the perceptions that citizens have about their security and the risks and threats that can endanger it»³⁵. Hence, as it will be seen later on, the set of activities carried out by this research and dissemination centre is intended to provide applied knowledge to the civilian population, as well as to normalize the presence of the national defence sector in the public debate³⁶.

Francesc Ponsa and Jaime González-Capitel add that the usefulness of think tanks rely on their capacity to provide «the public opinion with the bases upon which to form an objective criterion, and politicians with more information in order to be prepared to take actions»³⁷. This refers to the communicative nature of the entity, which acts as an intermediary between both spheres of society. As a result, the Institute is a public centre of thought that operates both as an agent of informative communication and as a subject of political action —more or less directly— in those issues that concern the security and defence of Spain.

To conclude, the IEEEE carries out its activity within the framework of strategic studies, which also leads us to address its academic dimension. Regarding the public nature of the Institute, Alberto Bueno stresses that «there is no doubt that a stimulus for strategic reflection is both the evolution of events and the search for policy relevance»³⁸. Also, in relation to the intermediary role of the Institute, it should be noted that strategic studies are a sub-discipline³⁹ that falls between military and international security studies⁴⁰, which is a position, according to Richard Betts, «broader in scope than strictly military

³⁵ MARSAL MUNTALÁ, Jordi. "Introducción". In: Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos. *Cultura de Seguridad y Defensa: fundamentos y perspectivas de mejora*. Cuadernos de Estrategia, (172):11-19, 2015, p. 11. Available at: http://www.ieeee.es/publicaciones-new/cuadernos-de-estrategia/2015/Cuaderno_172.html Date consulted: 19/04/2020. Author's translation from the original in Spanish.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 11-12.

³⁷ PONSÁ, Francesc y GONZÁLEZ-CAPITEL, Jaime. "Radiografía de los Think Tanks en España", *Fundación Ciudadanía y Valores*, Madrid, 2015, p. 13. Available at: <http://oett.es/2015/10/16/francesc-ponsa-y-jaime-gonzalez-capitel-radiografia-de-los-think-tanks-en-espana/> Date consulted: 19/04/2020. Author's translation from the original in Spanish.

³⁸ BUENO, Alberto. "De los estudios estratégicos...", Op. Cit. Author's translation from the original in Spanish.

³⁹ BUENO, Alberto. "De los estudios estratégicos...", Op. Cit.

⁴⁰ BUENO, Alberto. "De los estudios estratégicos...", Op. Cit.

problems, but more focused than security studies»⁴¹. In conclusion, the Institute is a meeting point between different parts of society, not just because of its status as a think tank and its close collaboration between the civil and military communities —moreover, an unmistakable sign of identity— but also owing to the very academic discipline from which it tackles issues that cut across security.

Analysis of the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies

At this point it is important to understand how the Institute operates in this political, strategic, and academic, and also normative scenario; as well as the implications of achieving its objectives in the established order. To this end, a brief introduction to strategic studies and their relationship with security studies shall provide us an insight into the use of the security concept as the central theme of this analysis. In addition, some postulates of the European critical schools⁴² will make it possible to identify some strengths and weaknesses of the IEEEE's activity, in order to propose some lines of action that could reinforce the role of the Institute as a disseminator and promoter of the security and defence culture in Spain.

Strategic studies and security studies

The concepts of strategy and security are closely related, both in theory and in practice. Traditionally, strategic thinking has been applied during war by the army leaders commanding the battle⁴³. In a Westphalian sense, each State sought to preserve the

⁴¹ BETTS, Richard K. "Should Strategic Studies Survive?", *World Politics*, 50(1):7-33, 1997, p. 9. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25054025?seq=1> Date consulted: 19/04/2020.

⁴² Generally speaking, critical security studies have been developed in Europe, particularly by the Copenhagen, Wales and Paris schools, although contributions from feminist security studies and postcolonial studies, among others, should be added. According to the group known as C.A.S.E., the essentialism that involves clear-cut dividing lines between critical security researchers obscure the fluid and dynamic nature of interpersonal relations. Therefore, it is desirable to attend the interaction between schools and their theories. C.A.S.E. Collective. "Critical Approaches to Security in Europe: A Networked Manifesto", *Security Dialogue*, 37(4): 443-487, December 2006, p. 450.

⁴³ BUENO, Alberto. "De los estudios estratégicos...", Op. Cit.

security of its population and territory against any external interference, thereby legitimizing its sovereignty before its own citizens and other States⁴⁴.

Since the 1950s, the concept of strategy has experienced a profound disciplinary development⁴⁵. During the Cold War, global interest focused on the rivalry between the two great powers, and it was clear that strategic thinking played a fundamental role during the events. Yet the end of the conflict brought forth a set of changes in the international system that suited the emergence, within International Relations, of critical voices towards the dominant theories of the discipline. In particular, this paradigm shift led to both a political and policy debate over the concept of security, which will be discussed below.

For now, it should be noted that strategic studies no longer received the attention they had previously enjoyed, although experts in the field have been able to adapt themselves to the new requirements of the ever-changing reality. As Bueno says, at present strategic studies «provide an epistemological tool to study the use of military/armed means and modes of force, taking into account both the internal and exogenous elements and dynamics of the conflict, in relation to the political effects produced and how the actors can resort to it to achieve their objectives»⁴⁶. That is, strategic thinking is used in peacetime and for political purposes as well⁴⁷.

The IEEE applies the concept of security as a central axis in many of its annual publications. To illustrate this, Ignacio Fuente Cobo shows in his introduction to the Strategy Paper 198 —about our country's vision of the various security challenges— that Spain «adjusts its actions according to the risks and threats to which it is exposed and its multilateral commitments, but also to the need to safeguard international peace and security as the best way of safeguarding national interests»⁴⁸. This quote can be understood as an example of the strategic approach to the study of issues surrounding

⁴⁴ JACKSON, Robert et al. "International Relations as...", Op. Cit., p. 6.

⁴⁵ BUENO, Alberto. "De los estudios estratégicos...", Op. Cit.

⁴⁶ BUENO, Alberto. "De los estudios estratégicos...", Op. Cit. Author's translation from the original in Spanish.

⁴⁷ BUENO, Alberto. "De los estudios estratégicos...", Op. Cit.

⁴⁸ FUENTE COBO, Ignacio. *Introducción*, Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos. Retos diversos a la seguridad. Una visión desde España. Cuadernos de Estrategia, (198):9-29, 2018. Available at: http://www.ieeee.es/publicaciones-new/cuadernos-de-estrategia/2018/Cuaderno_198.html. Date

consulted: 19/04/2020. Author's translation from the original in Spanish.

security. Thus, based on the strategic thinking carried out by the different actors that make up the dynamics of the international system, the IEEE focuses its analyses on the defence of national security.

The concept of security as a core element of the analysis

The concept of security is commonly characterized as ambiguous⁴⁹, denied⁵⁰, confused and, ultimately, essentially contested: a term, the latter «so value-laden that no amount of argument or evidence can ever lead to agreement on a single version as the 'correct or standard use'»⁵¹. Despite this, the concept of security is one of the ontological foundations that have guided the debates on political philosophy about peace and power⁵². Thus, according to Martin Wight's theory, the realist tradition conceives international anarchy as a space where the state naturally seeks its own security and survival, through the exercise of its power⁵³; while the liberal tradition understands security as one of the objectives in the interaction between states in this anarchic space⁵⁴. Between these two approaches lies the rationalist tradition, which emphasizes the interest of the states in building a legal security order⁵⁵.

Yet, in the words of Ken Booth «traditional security thinking [...] has been associated with the intellectual hegemony of realism»⁵⁶. Based on this premise, the classic narrative links the concept of security to the exercise of Westphalian sovereign power

⁴⁹ OROZCO RESTREPO, Gabriel Antonio. "El concepto de la seguridad en la Teoría de las Relaciones Internacionales", *Revista CIDOB d'Afers Internacionals*, (72):161-180, December 2005-January, 2006, p. 163. Available:

[https://www.cidob.org/ca/articulos/revista_cidob_d_afers_internacionals/el_concepto_de_la_seguridad_e_n_la_teor%C3%ADa_de_las_relaciones_internacionales/\(language\)/esl-ES](https://www.cidob.org/ca/articulos/revista_cidob_d_afers_internacionals/el_concepto_de_la_seguridad_e_n_la_teor%C3%ADa_de_las_relaciones_internacionales/(language)/esl-ES). Date consulted: 19/04/2020.

⁵⁰ BALDWIN, David A. "The concept of security". *Review of International Studies*, (23):5-26, 1997, pp. 8-9.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 10.

⁵² OROZCO RESTREPO, Gabriel Antonio. "El concepto de la seguridad...", Op. Cit., p. 166.

⁵³ JACKSON, Robert and SORENSEN, Georg and MOLLER, Jorgen. "Realism". *On their: Introduction to International Relations, theories and approaches*. United Kingdom, Oxford University Press, 2018, p. 70.

⁵⁴ OROZCO RESTREPO, Gabriel Antonio. "El concepto de la seguridad...", Op. Cit., p. 165.

⁵⁵ OROZCO RESTREPO, Gabriel Antonio. "El concepto de la seguridad...", Op. Cit., p. 166; JACKSON, Robert et al. "Realism...", Op. Cit., pp. 150-151.

⁵⁶ BOOTH, Ken. "Seguridad y emancipación", *Relaciones Internacionales*, (23):99-116, June-September 2013, p. 105. Available at: <https://revistas.uam.es/index.php/relacionesinternacionales/article/view/5181>. Date consulted: 19/04/2020. Author's translation from the original in Spanish.

against the threats and risks that challenge the integrity of the established order. In short, this implies a special emphasis on the military power of the nation-state to deal with the threats to the territory of sovereignty and its population⁵⁷, to guarantee national security⁵⁸.

The absolute value⁵⁹ that this Hobbesian paradigm places on security has greatly influenced the international context. According to Angie Larenas, neorealism's assimilation as the dominant approach in security studies is due to the association of this perspective with political actors of power⁶⁰. Therefore, regardless the alternative theories that emerged in the academic field after the end of the Cold War, the realist paradigm has served as the grounds for developing public security policies. As discussed briefly below, the events of the post-Cold War order have forced a broadening of the security agenda; however, these developments coexist with a predominant rationalist ontology and positivist epistemology in International Relations.

Despite the aforementioned ambiguity about the term «security», the IEEE recognizes the need to re-evaluate the meaning of this concept. Since the 1990s —specifically since the 1994 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report⁶¹—, the institution seeks to subscribe to the evolution of the concept of security, extending it to the entire spectrum of «human security»⁶² which, as former IEEE analyst

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁸ In the words of OROZCO, national security «includes, in broad terms, the protection of the state against external aggression and against internal movements that could endanger it, as well as the pacification of society». OROZCO RESTREPO, Gabriel Antonio. “El concepto de la seguridad...”, *Op. Cit.*, p. 164. Author's translation from the original in Spanish.

⁵⁹ In the end, according to WALTZ «in anarchy, security is the highest end. Only if survival is assured can states seek such other goals as tranquility, profit, and power». Cited in: BALDWIN, David A. “The concept of security...”, *Op. Cit.*, p. 21.

⁶⁰ LARENAS ÁLVAREZ, Angie A. “La confluencia entre estudios críticos de seguridad y seguridad humana: las dinámicas de inclusión y superación”, *Relaciones Internacionales*, (23):81-98, June-September 2013, p. 83. Available at: <https://revistas.uam.es/index.php/relacionesinternacionales/article/view/5180/5627>. Date consulted: 19/04/2020.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁶² In February of this year, the academic journal «Relaciones Internacionales», directed by the International Relations Studies Group (GERI) of the Autonomous University of Madrid, published an issue on the concept of human security, offering several approaches to the proposed topic. GERI. “La seguridad humana 25 años después”, *Relaciones Internacionales*, (43), February 2020. Available at: <https://revistas.uam.es/index.php/relacionesinternacionales/index>. Date consulted: 19/04/2020.

Mario Laboire Iglesias emphasizes, it encompasses issues such as «the economy, food, health, politics, the environment and the protection of individuals and the communities in which they live»⁶³. Similarly, the concept of defence is closely linked to the Responsibility to Protect, which is the guarantee of the independence of the nation state⁶⁴. But also, physical integrity of individuals and respect for their fundamental rights and freedoms are a universal issue⁶⁵.

The IEEE adapted its conceptual framework through the assimilation of new elements that potentially blur the centrality of territoriality in national security, as well as the fact that military capability is not the only tool to guarantee the defence of the nation-state and its values. However, this positioning may not be irreconcilable with the dominant inter-subjective consensus in the discipline, since the broadening of the security agenda could, as Francisco Verdes-Montenegro explains, «lead to the elevation of «security» to a kind of universal good under which all social relations should be governed»⁶⁶. Thus, the centrality of the State persists, and it can even extend its area of influence.

The post-positivist epistemology that supposedly goes along with the concept of human security is therefore more of a hybrid approach that, although it rejects the ontological basis of the realist paradigm, it fails to question the dominant structures. For example, the IEEE's external collaborator Miguel Ángel Pérez Franco reflects upon the concept of human security and recognizes that it «does not replace the dispositions and canons of the current security strategies, but rather complements and interrelates them; and it establishes the human being as the common denominator»⁶⁷. This, according to

⁶³ LABOIRE IGLESIAS, Mario A. "La evolución del concepto de seguridad". Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos, 2011, p. 3. Available at: http://www.ieeee.es/publicaciones-new/documentosmarco/2011/DIEEEM05_2011EvolucionConceptoSeguridad.html. Date consulted: 19/04/2020. Author's translation from the original in Spanish.

⁶⁴ BUENO CAMPOS, Eduardo. "Cultura de seguridad y defensa en la perspectiva del gobierno del conocimiento". In: Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos. Cultura de Seguridad y Defensa: fundamentos y perspectivas de mejora. Cuadernos de estrategia, (172):21-59, 2015, p. 44. Available at: http://www.ieeee.es/publicaciones-new/cuadernos-de-estrategia/2015/Cuaderno_172.html. Date consulted: 19/04/2020.

⁶⁵ Ibidem.

⁶⁶ VERDES-MONTENEGRO ESCÁNEZ, Francisco J. "Securitización: agendas de investigación abiertas para el estudio de la seguridad", *Relaciones Internacionales*, (29): 111-131, September 2015, p. 114. Available at: <https://revistas.uam.es/index.php/relacionesinternacionales/article/view/5273>. Date consulted: 19/04/2020. Author's translation from the original in Spanish.

⁶⁷ PÉREZ FRANCO, Miguel Ángel. "Seguridad humana: ¿el complemento perfecto para nuestras

Larenas, is the main criticism towards the theory of human security: its practical nature does not provide a critical approach to the established political agenda⁶⁸.

As far as the ultimate goal of the Institute is concerned, the assimilation of the concept of security —centred on the achievement of human security— implies the very expansion of the concept of defence culture which, as Manuel López Blázquez expresses, must be carried out according to the elements that encompass the concept of human security⁶⁹. In this line, Ignacio García and Samuel Nájera explain that, through the dissemination of the Defence Culture, «it should be transmitted to society the need to permanently assume an attitude of reaction [...] with the sole aim of minimizing the exposure to existing or future vulnerabilities»⁷⁰. However, for this purpose, an initial movement of identification of such contingencies is necessary, from which the civilian population would assume which are the threats and risks that endanger their security and that of the nation-state. Thus, it is in society's perception of its own security that the IEEE plays a fundamental role.

Let's take as an example the Institute's coverage of a question of recent political notoriety. The 2017 National Security Strategy of Spain (hereinafter, NSS) identifies, in its fourth chapter, the threats and challenges to the Spanish territory and population⁷¹. Concerning the threats, they are structured in three different blocks: those that directly affect Spain's national security, those that undermine global common spaces and those that hover over critical infrastructure, which in turn are detailed in twelve different spaces⁷². In relation to the challenges, these are current issues which «without being

estrategias de seguridad?”. Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos, 2016, p. 3. Available at: <http://www.iecee.es/publicaciones-new/documentos-de-opinion/2016/DIEEEO118-2016.html>. Date consulted: 19/04/2020. Author's translation from the original in Spanish.

⁶⁸ LARENAS ÁLVAREZ, Angie A. “La confluencia entre...”, Op. Cit., p. 93.

⁶⁹ Cited in: BUENO CAMPOS, Eduardo. “Cultura de seguridad y defensa...”, Op. Cit., p. 44.

⁷⁰ GARCÍA PALOMERO, Ignacio, NÁJERA BAILÓN, Samuel. “Reflexiones acerca del gobierno del conocimiento en la cultura de seguridad y defensa: un proyecto educativo”. In: Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos. Cultura de Seguridad y Defensa: fundamentos y perspectivas de mejora. Cuadernos de estrategia, (172):85-118, 2015, pp. 98-99. Available at: http://www.iecee.es/publicaciones-new/cuadernos-de-estrategia/2015/Cuaderno_172.html. Date consulted: 19/04/2020. Author's translation from the original in Spanish.

⁷¹ Office of the Presidency of the Government. *Spain's 2017 National Security Strategy*, p. 58. Available at: <https://www.dsn.gob.es/es/estrategias-publicaciones/estrategias/estrategia-seguridad-nacional-2017>. Date consulted: 19/04/2020.

⁷² Ibid., pp. 58-72.

threats in themselves, increase vulnerability, create situations of instability, or may foster the emergence of other threats, aggravate them or accelerate their fruition»⁷³. To be specific, the document highlights economic instability, energy-related vulnerability, migration, emergencies and disasters, epidemics and pandemics, and climate change⁷⁴.

Compared to the 2013 NSS, the 2017 NSS has identified a new threat to global common spaces: the vulnerability of airspace and outer space. These include actions against navigation control systems, the illicit handling of remotely controlled aircraft — commonly referred to as «drones»— and the proliferation of space debris⁷⁵. Following this premise, the subject matter is shown to the public for their awareness of its importance in their daily lives. However, in order to ensure this new threat receives the proper public and political attention, there is a need for further theoretical development of the implications of its dangers. In other words, it is mandatory to disseminate research and analysis that will enhance the understanding of air and outer space. Within this field, and as another example of its broad scope of action, the Institute —as a ministry pillar for the dissemination of security and defence culture— would have the potential to raise awareness among the population about insecurity in this area.

From a critical standpoint, authors such as Barry Buzan and Waever would call this process a securitization movement⁷⁶. In this sense —yet with no intention to delve into the Copenhagen school's doctrine— both Verdes-Montenegro and Rita Taureck emphasize two elements of the securitization theory that are of particular interest for the present analysis. On the one hand, security «is linked up with dimensions that are particularly sensitive for human beings, such as fear, survival and the desire to live free

⁷³ Office of the Presidency of the Government. *Spain's 2017 National Security Strategy...*, Op. Cit., p. 58.

⁷⁴ Office of the Presidency of the Government. *Spain's 2017 National Security Strategy...*, Op. Cit., pp. 72-78.

⁷⁵ Office of the Presidency of the Government. *Spain's 2017 National Security Strategy...*, Op. Cit., p. 70.

⁷⁶ IEEE collaborator José Lorenzo-Penalva Lucas defines securitization as «a process by which quality or status as a security affair is given to an issue that may threaten the survival of an entity, whether it be individuals, a collectively, states or mankind». In connection with the analysis proposed in this document, attention to the theory of securitization is based on this basic premise: the identification of the elements of a securitization process, mainly the reference object and the actors involved. LORENZO-PENALVA LUCAS, José. *El concepto de seguridad. Importancia relativa de las dimensiones de la seguridad en Europa y en el sur del Mediterráneo*, Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos, 2017, p. 23. Available at: <http://www.ieeee.es/contenido/noticias/2017/08/DIEEEE083-2017.html>. Date consulted: 19/04/2020. Author's translation from the original in Spanish.

from threats»⁷⁷. Therefore, the underlying purpose behind the discursive act of treating an international issue as a threat to national security impacts significantly on public opinion and to the established political agenda. On the other hand, both authors stress that the effectiveness of this discursive act depends on the legitimacy granted by the audience to the securitizing actor who identifies the risks and threats to the population⁷⁸. Therefore, an entity's authority for addressing issues related to national security, together with its discursive expertise are two key elements in understanding that a given actor participates in the process of representing a certain element of international reality as a security issue; and, similarly, those official institutions that —like the IEEE— are committed to disseminate that security is an essential parameter for Spanish people's well-being. Thus, retaking the example of airspace and outer space vulnerability, the tracking of keywords on the Institution's website —namely «air systems», «navigation» and «drone»— reveals that in 2018 the IEEE published up to nine articles about the legal and ethical implications of drones, as well as a Strategy Paper on aerospace security⁷⁹. From 2019 to date, airspace and outer space vulnerability remains a concern for the IEEE. Several articles have addressed the concern over operations in cyberspace⁸⁰, as well as the Strategy Paper 201, devoted to the legal limits of current operations⁸¹.

⁷⁷ VERDES-MONTENEGRO ESCÁNEZ, Francisco J. “Securitización: agendas de...”, Op. Cit., p. 117. Author's translation from the original in Spanish. Author's translation from the original in Spanish.

⁷⁸ VERDES-MONTENEGRO ESCÁNEZ, Francisco J. “Securitización: agendas de...”, Op. Cit., p. 117. TAURECK, Rita. “Securitization theory and securitization studies”, *Journal of International Relations and Development*, (9): 53-61, 2006, p. 55.

⁷⁹ Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos. *Hacia una estrategia de seguridad aeroespacial*. Cuadernos de estrategia, (192), 2018, 237 p. Available at: http://www.ieeee.es/publicaciones-new/cuadernos-de-estrategia/2018/Cuaderno_192.html. Date consulted: 19/04/2020.

⁸⁰ See, inter alia: VÁZQUEZ, Luis y VÁZQUEZ-POLETTI, José Luis. “La gran aventura de la exploración de Marte”. Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos, 2019, 18 p. Available at: http://www.ieeee.es/contenido/noticias/2019/02/DIEEEO13_VAZVAZ-Marte.html. DÍAZ MARTÍN, Alberto. *Vehículos aéreos no tripulados en la misión especial de observación de la OSCE en Ucrania*, Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos, 2019, 26 p. Available at: http://www.ieeee.es/contenido/noticias/2019/06/DIEEEM07_2019ALBDIA_UAVOSCE.html SÁNCHEZ-ROMÁN URRUTIA, Gabriel. *Amenazas Persistentes Avanzadas (APT) como medida de disuasión en el ciberespacio*, Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos, 2020, 14 p. Available at: http://www.ieeee.es/contenido/noticias/2020/02/DIEEEO12_2020GABSAN_Submarinos.html Date consulted: 19/04/2020.

⁸¹ Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos. *Límites jurídicos de las operaciones actuales: nuevos desafíos*. Cuaderno de Estrategia, (201), 2019, 228 p. Available at: <http://www.ieeee.es/publicaciones->

In short, when compared to the occasional publications on airspace and outer space over the past few years, it seems that today this particular threat receives much more attention from the Institute. However, it should be stressed that only when the audience acknowledges this threat⁸² will it become part of Spain's defence culture, a fact that would imply recognition and acceptance of the work of the Armed Forces in the defence of the population against the specific threat to our air and outer space.

This reasoning simply provides a basis for the reality of the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies as a transcendental actor in the Spanish security agenda, most notably with respect to the threats and risks identified by the State. Thus, public perception on a set of elements from the international context does influence on the recognition of threats to peace inside and outside our borders, the decision making process in this respect and, in short, on the need to promote a culture of security and defence. For all these reasons, the IEEE's discourse's capacity to construct ideas must be analyzed in close relationship with the social responsibility that comes with assuming a certain ontology, epistemology and methodology when investigating the international reality.

In conclusion. Strengths and weaknesses of the IEEE

The main question to be asked is what are the implications of the aforementioned statements on the political and academic security scenario? And what are the strengths and weaknesses of the IEEE's position in this context? Undoubtedly, the growth of the Institute against the constant changes in the international geostrategic panorama justifies its durability in the state machinery, as well as its credibility in the academic space of security. The overcoming of the pure military approach in the security issue⁸³; its determination to embrace the concept of human security as the axis of its numerous analyses; and its intention —from a problem-solving perspective— to articulate material proposals to ensure international peace and security, have allowed to place the individual and the community at the centre of the security issue in Spain. It is an

new/cuadernos-de-estrategia/2019/Cuaderno_201.html. Date consulted: 19/04/2020.

⁸² VERDES-MONTENEGRO ESCÁNEZ, Francisco J. "Securitización: agendas de...", Op. Cit., p. 117.

⁸³ BOOTH, Ken. "Seguridad y emancipación...", Op. Cit., pp. 105-106.

institutional positioning that strengthens the management of cross-cutting issues that affect human welfare: this was invisible to strategic and security studies not long ago and its attainment have made the IEEE a national reference source.

However, human security approaches have not been exempting from comments by part of the academic community. As Karlos Pérez de Armiño states, critical security schools have had reservations about the fact that the concept of human security is essentially practical and linked to the political order, as it has meant little normative work on the term⁸⁴. In the case of the IEEE, it seems certain that many contributors have written on many issues relating to human security. For example, the spectrum of case studies on the security-development and the security-defence nexus. Also, it is worth emphasizing the effort made to address the reality of indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and migrants, as well as the performance of non-State actors such as non-governmental organizations⁸⁵. The above shows the attention of the IEEE to realities that have been overlooked by the traditional concept of security. Some contributors have indeed written more theoretically, such as on the evolution of the concept of security and the need to materialize human security in the current strategic scenario⁸⁶.

Authors like Pérez de Armiño, Larenas Álvarez and Edward Newman acknowledge the ability of the concept of human security to interact with reality, as well as the need to deepen its ontology, epistemology, and methodology. That is, based on a critical studies premise, the Institute is a space for reflection that enables a more in-depth debate on the theoretical implications of addressing the international reality from the perspective of

⁸⁴ PÉREZ DE ARMIÑO, Karlos. “¿Más allá de la seguridad humana? Desafíos y aportes de los estudios críticos de seguridad”, *Cursos de Derecho Internacional y Relaciones Internacionales de Vitoria-Gasteiz*, 2011, pp. 241-243. Available at: <https://www.ehu.es/es/web/cursosderechointernacionalvitoria/-/mas-alla-de-la-seguridad-humana-desafios-y-aportes-de-los-estudios-criticos-de-seguridad>. Date consulted: 19/04/2020. In relation to this, Angie Larenas states that «The incidence on political discourse and its use in implementing security policies are two limitations of critical security studies and, in turn, two elements that characterize the human security approach». Therefore the dialogue between human security and critical security studies can be mutually rewarding. LARENAS ÁLVAREZ, Angie A. “La confluencia entre...”, *Op. Cit.*, p. 93. Author's translation from the original in Spanish.

⁸⁵ To see the articles that the IEEE has published in relation to human security please go online: http://www.ieee.es/comun/buscar_resultados.html?q=seguridad%20humana. Date consulted: 19/04/2020.

⁸⁶ This articles are: LABOIRE IGLESIAS, Mario A. “La evolución del...”, *Op. Cit.* PÉREZ FRANCO, Miguel Ángel. *Seguridad humana: ¿el complemento perfecto para nuestras estrategias de seguridad?*, Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos, 2016, p. 15. Available at: <http://www.ieee.es/publicaciones-new/documentos-de-opinion/2016/DIEEO118-2016.html>. Date Consulted: 19/04/2020.

human security. Therefore, the meeting points between both academic sectors will allow identifying lines of action that can strengthen the role of the Institute in the culture of security and defence in Spain.

Within the framework of the Copenhagen School, Ole Waever states that the mere presentation of an issue as being of transcendental importance in the field of security «suggests that all necessary measures will be taken in the future to block the threat and to respond to it»⁸⁷. According to this statement, this may lead to justifying the use of extraordinary means for dealing with a particular threat. In this line, it is essential to quote the contribution of David Baldwin, who asks how much security is enough to face a threat, how to measure it and at what cost⁸⁸. Undoubtedly, this reflection —although already present in their daily work— should become more central in the IEEE's analyses.

In this context, the Institute's authority in security matters is a strength that can be used to influence the securitization process. For example, the IEEE would have the opportunity to promote overcoming the single prism of security approach to a threat or risk⁸⁹. To this end, as Waever proposes, it may be appropriate to refer as challenges rather than threats, and thus avoid these issues drifting away from general policy or generating a broad sense of insecurity among the public⁹⁰. Moreover, the critical postulates of the Paris school propose an exercise in interpreting language. According to de Armiño, this school —which is in line with post-structuralist thought—, is based on the fact that «the study of discourses helps us to understand the existing power relations in society, as well as the knowledge that has been marginalized from the dominant discourse»⁹¹. Therefore, they propose to reflect on notions such as threat, risk and identity, among others.

⁸⁷ VERDES-MONTENEGRO ESCÁNEZ, Francisco J. “Securitización: agendas de...”, Op. Cit., p. 116. Author's translation from the original in Spanish.

⁸⁸ BALDWIN, David A. “The concept of security...”, Op. Cit., pp. 14-17.

⁸⁹ TAURECK, Rita. “Securitization theory...”, Op. Cit., p. 55.

⁹⁰ VERDES-MONTENEGRO ESCÁNEZ, Francisco J. “Securitización: agendas de...”, Op. Cit., p. 116.

⁹¹ PÉREZ DE ARMIÑO, Karlos. “¿Más allá de...”, Op? Cit., p. 274. Author's translation from the original in Spanish.

Finally, it is important to mention the capacity for interaction between the human security approach and feminist and gender perspectives. Once again, the tracking of key words on the Institution's website —«gender», «woman» and «feminism» — as well as a look at the quarterly bulletins published between 2017 and 2019, reveal a growing interest in the role of women in the strategic panorama. In particular, there is a trend to address gender issues in relation to education, conflict in Africa and the Sustainable Development Goals. Thus, for example, the Institute applies a gender approach when it makes visible women's daily experiences in situations of insecurity⁹². Also, when overcoming of the duality of man/combattant and woman/victim, assuming that the roles of one and the other are different according to the context of the conflict.

However, the aforementioned lines of action would also involve further study of the ontological, epistemological and methodological parameters of the concept of human security from a gender perspective. The potential dialogue between the two approaches not only allows the upward trend observed so far in the spread of analyses on women to be maintained, but also to deepen the roots of this normative relationship and, as Karlos de Armiño puts it, «to build theories taking as a starting point the visions and experiences of women in the political field of security»⁹³.

In conclusion, engaging in a research space entails a great responsibility for any analyst to become aware of the influence that his or her work will have on the academic community, but also the influence that the academic community will have on his or her work. For this reason, the strengths and weaknesses of any entity —in this case, the Spanish Institute of Strategic Studies— must be analysed on an ongoing basis, from the conviction that they are always the best prerequisites for progressing towards an objective that is as necessary as it is essential: the awareness that the security and defence of Spain is an inexcusable condition for guaranteeing our existence and our development as a society.

*Cristina Castilla Cid**
Master in International Relations and African Studies

⁹² PÉREZ DE ARMIÑO, Karlos. “¿Más allá de...”, *Op? Cit.*, p. 305.

⁹³ PÉREZ DE ARMIÑO, Karlos. “¿Más allá de...”, *Op? Cit.*, p. 292. Author's translation from the original in Spanish.