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A theoretical framework for vertical and horizontal security culture analysis: A review of Serbian literature

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ABSTRACT

Security culture is a term that is increasingly used in everyday discourse. Such a phenomenon is to be expected, given that in the modern era security is becoming increasingly difficult to achieve, whereas individuals are becoming increasingly isolated, which is accompanied by a rise in distrust. These circumstances create the need for a comprehensive interpretation of security culture, approached from the perspectives of the various disciplines from which it is composed. The subject of this paper is the analysis of the content of security culture and its implications for various forms and approaches to security. This paper will address the segment of security approaches, with the dominant view that, despite the evolution of security and threats, the state remains the most capable and responsible actor for the mass security education of the population. In addition to the identification and explanation of the importance of security culture for different levels of security and security approaches, through theoretical analysis and systematization of primarily Serbian literature, the aim is to highlight its contribution to the development of self-aware, responsible, and security-competent individuals and communities. The thesis of the paper posits that security culture represents a significant and distinctive factor in the realization of individual, societal, and national security, as well as for implementation of different approaches to security. The applied methods include: content analysis and literature review, description, conceptualization, as well as interpretative and comparative approach. The conclusion and contribution of this work lie in the analysis of security culture in a new way, one that explains its importance for individual, societal, and national security, as well as its influence on various security approaches. Furthermore, on those foundations and assessment of contemporary endangerment, an approach of formation and development of security culture was created in terms of the types of subjects, their significance, and internal relationships in that process.

KEYWORDS

security culture, individual security, societal security, national security, security approaches, education.

Introduction

Since the appearance of the first forms of the state up to the present day, the understanding of security has expanded significantly, and various approaches have been developed. They range from those that place the state at the center while neglecting individual security, to those that focus on systems of international organization, individuals themselves, and the security aspect of a certain sphere (economy, ecology etc.). However, security system is becoming insufficient for a successful opposition to contemporary endangerment. Therefore, it is necessary to educate the population about security, that is, to form and develop a security culture. Security culture provides knowledge, skills, and information about a broad spectrum of security challenges, risks, and threats (CRTs). These stem from security science, as well as from segments of other sciences relevant to security, such as psychology, sociology, medicine, law, physics, chemistry, and others. This indicates the multidisciplinarity of security culture, that is, the multidisciplinary approach that constitutes an integral part of its analysis. Regardless of the

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type of security approach and the concept of state security education, it is important to understand and integrate the fundamental principles of security culture: morality, consistency, responsibility, continuity, and timeliness (Stajić, Mijalković & Stanarević, 2005: 55–70).

Security culture was first mentioned in the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency on the Chernobyl disaster, while in Serbian literature, which will be primarily analyzed here, it was first defined as a part of general culture that encompasses—"a body of knowledge in the field of security (the fundamental values and achievements that are the object of attack and protection, the methods and forms, as well as the actors of endangerment), which makes individuals, communities, and society more capable of recognizing the methods, forms, and actions of endangerment, as well as the agents of such activities, regardless of where and how they manifest" (Đorđević, 1986; INSAG, 1986). As it has been noted, Stajić tried to refine the definition, stating that it is "a set of adopted attitudes, knowledge, skills, and rules in the field of security, manifested as behavior and process, concerning the need, methods, and means of protecting personal, social, and international values from all forms and agents of endangerment, regardless of the place or time of their manifestation." In this way, he provided what was today the most widely accepted definition in security literature (Stanarević, 2017; Stajić, 2006). According to this definition of security culture, it becomes evident that it is determined in relation to endangerment, danger, or threats, which represent the key determinants for establishing and developing such a concept (Stanarević, 2012).

A more recent understanding of security culture has been formulated in a different way, defining it as "a phenomenon consisting of human creation and the utilization of the totality of established intangible and material human achievements, as the sources of non-military and military factors of self-defense, which enable confrontation with threats… Security culture is also a source of harmony in the activities of society throughout its developmental process, within three coexisting spheres: the mental-spiritual (individual), the social-organizational (collective), and the physical (material)" (Shay, 2023). Besides the evolution of definitions, security culture can also be presented through the approach which is supported by European Agency for Network and Information Security. Namely, it is being promoted that (organizational) security culture consists of seven dimensions: attitudes, behaviors, cognition, communication, compliance, norms, and responsibilities (Laycock, Petrič, & Roer, 2019). Security culture thus presents concrete attitudes toward certain questions and themes, based on which it provides a framework for positive and negative behaviors, as well as information and knowledge from a various spheres, which, in combination with personal experience, transform into cognition. It teaches communication and compliance, while encouraging adherence to those principles, explaining the value and protection of norms (moral, legal, religious, ethical etc.), and introducing the responsibilities.

The subject of this paper is the analysis of the content of security culture and its implications on various forms and approaches to security. The aim is to identify and explain the significance of security culture for different levels of security and security approaches, through theoretical analysis and systematization of existing literature, as well as to highlight its contribution to the development of self-aware, responsible, and security-competent individuals and communities. Accordingly, the thesis of the paper posits that security culture represents a significant and distinctive factor in the realization of individual, societal, and national security, as well as the implementation of various approaches to security. The research problem concerns the necessity of a security culture as a multidisciplinary tool of both proactive and reactive effects in countering contemporary endangerment. However, explaining this requires the development of a horizontal and vertical analysis of security culture, through which its value and impact on various levels of, and approaches to, security will be defined. Through the clarification of the research problem, an adequate concept for the formation and development of security culture will be established, taking into account the main actors, their significance, and the internal relationships within this process.

Methodology

A theoretical-analytical methodological approach is primarily applied, which is characteristic of research in the field of security studies when dealing with complex social and theoretical concepts. The methods applied include: content analysis and literature review, description, conceptualization, as well as interpretative and comparative approaches. The literature consists of works that focus on security culture itself, as well as those dealing with security-related knowledge and skills, forms of endangerment, various types and approaches to security, and the analysis of educational programs containing elements of security culture. For purposes of future works, which may have as their subject a comparative analysis of the theoretical determination of security culture, the paper predominantly analyzes Serbian literature as a starting point for further research. The comparative method is applied to the greatest extent in the segment dedicated to security approaches and horizontal analysis, or more precisely to the value of security culture for individual, societal and national security.

By the nature of the process, a vertical analysis is conducted first, focusing on security and culture, their etymology, definitions, and related concepts. Based on this, a horizontal analysis is then developed, which includes the examination of the significance of security culture for individual, societal, and national security, highlighting the areas of life and work, as well as types of security threats, in relation to which security culture provides appropriate knowledge, skills, and information. The special part of the segments about the relationship of security culture and individual, societal and national security are conclusions on the highest value of security culture in the context of a specific type of security for a certain security approach.

Vertical analysis

Security

Security is commonly said to have existed since the emergence of life itself, with the primary concern of every living being about survival, development, and ensuring the continuation of its species (Stajić, Mijalković & Stanarević, 2006). Only many thousands of years later would the perception of security expand to encompass the safety of entire social communities, namely the state, so that today the concept of security is understood in a much broader sense (Stajić & Lazić, 2015). No form of social consciousness, be it religious, ideological, scientific, philosophical, or artistic, has resisted interpreting the manifestations of this phenomenon, which is organically linked to all civilizational achievements, diverse cultures, and value systems (Keković & Dimitrijević, 2017).

In the Serbian language, the equivalent word for security is *bezbednost*, comprised of the prefix *bez* (without, signifying nonexistence, absence) and the word *beda* (abject poverty, a condition that provokes contempt, misfortune, disaster, or evil), and it denotes the state of a person who is protected from danger, safeguarded, safe, or harmless (Stanarević & Ejdus, 2009). In the Serbian language, the term *sigurnost* (eng. safety) is also used, whose root derives from the Latin noun *sēcūritas, ātis* (peace of mind, carefreeness, safety) and adjectives *sēcūrus* (without worry, without fear, not afraid of any danger) (Simović, 2022). For the purposes of this study, the theoretical distinction between *security* and *safety* is significant. Specifically, in literature where these two terms are not conflated or used interchangeably, *safety* is defined as a narrower concept, whose referent is personal value (the individual), whereas *security* is a broader concept encompassing individual, societal, and state security, extending up to international security.

When analyzing the developmental perspective on approaches to security, it is necessary to begin with the realist approach, which is state-centric and holds that the main threats to security are exclusively military in nature, since the military factor is perceived as primary in international relations. Thus, the primary objects of endangerment are sovereignty and territorial integrity.

During the Cold War period, this influence was evident in the security education programs of the Warsaw Pact states, where the military component was explicitly emphasized (Kešetović, 2021). In a similar vein, the definition provided in a United Nations study conducted in 1986 states: "Security is a state in which states consider themselves free from the threat of military attack, political pressure, or economic coercion, so that they can develop and progress freely" (Nations Unies, 1986). Here, reasoning begins to include other forms of threats beyond classical military ones, reflecting what is known as the negativist approach to security. The negativist approach assumes that security is the absence of threats and agents of endangerment, which, according to experts, does not provide a definitive solution to the problem. The next step would involve compiling a list of all forms and agents of threat, which is problematic in itself (Stajić & Lazić, 2015). As Stajić and Lazić note, this "leads to a new approach, namely the determination of the content of security based on the understanding that security is, in fact, a value (state, national, political, moral, economic, personal, etc.), an instrumental value that is explained as a means to achieve something, rather than merely a phenomenon (state) in itself" (2015). Therefore, security is not only the absence of threat but also the presence of justice, morality, and culture (Stajić & Lazić, 2015).

In addition to the realist approach, Simić distinguishes between the liberal-institutionalist and the alternative-critical approaches. He concludes that liberal institutionalists focus on international cooperation at the multilateral level and on collaboration through institutions, emphasizing political, economic, and cultural cooperation in the context of globalization (Simić, 2006). Proponents of the alternative-critical approach shift the focus of analysis from the state, as the referent object of security, to social groups and individuals. This is significant because it highlights issues of structural violence and the possibility that citizens' security may be compromised due to systemic deficiencies in the existing global order (Simić, 2006).

One of the most popular security approaches, "sectoral approach to security", created by a group of scientists formed around the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute, was developed with the aim of inclusion of military, as the existing sector, in addition to four other sectors: political,economical, societal, and economical (Buzan, Waever, & Wilde, 1998; Sretović, Talijan, & Beriša, 2016, p. 77). The value of this approach lies in the fact that the majority of security problems represent a combination of several sectors, which intertwine and affect one another (Sretović, Talijan, & Beriša, 2016, p. 77). It is also emphasized that sectoral analytical framework facilitates the organization and conceptual differentiation of various security dinamics, with the purpose of a better understanding of complex societal reality (Gaćinović, 2012, pp. 114–115). In this regard, the multidisciplinary of security culture is highlighted in addition to its value for understanding and implementing the sectoral approach to security.

It is important to note that security can also be viewed as a function, and that a security system may be organized differently depending on the character of society. Fundamentally, three types of this function can be distinguished: 1) a function based on purely military principles of protection and typically militaristic forms of state organization; 2) a classical state protection; and 3) a combination of state and societal protection mechanisms in systems that incorporate certain forms of socialization of the security function (Savić & Stajić, 2006). The third function represents the most adequate example of security culture, a case that requires a security-educated and trained population and can yield the best results in accordance with the presence of security culture.

Political geographer Mirko Grčić describes the security function as a service function, as it provides "services", including security, to the society within the state (Grčić, 2000). The author further specifies the "services" of security education, using security culture as an example, in light of the consideration that it serves as a tool for the state to ensure a higher level of safety and security. This is based on the view of the state apparatus, namely, the educational system and the security system as the only capable actors in the proper and controlled development of security culture across the entire territory of the state. Thus, *security education is—a service*

function, security culture —the product, and the application of security culture —a tool of the state, through whose mediated use (by citizens) various forms of threats are addressed.

Although experts do not arrive at a universally accepted definition, they emphasize that "security is one, singular, and indivisible (integral) across time and space, whether we understand it as a state, function, organization, policy, philosophy, or something similar… In contrast to security, endangerment is diverse and heterogeneous, varying in time, space, intensity, forms, and agents" (Savić & Stajić, 2006). Every approach to security also implies the maintenance and protection of the welfare of the members of a given society, as defined by the members themselves or by the culture (Stanarević, 2012). Ultimately, security is a multifaceted phenomenon that allows for various interpretations and multidisciplinary insights (Keković & Dimitrijević, 2017).

Both the state and the individual are elements of security, contributing to the maintenance of peace in different ways and to varying degrees, with the potential to become sources or agents of endangerment. Since the state possesses the power to govern both state and non-state security actors, as well as those who contribute indirectly to security, it is justifiably considered the primary bearer of security. Today, the state recognizes that military threats are not the only ones and that an individual can cause significant harm; therefore, being responsible toward its citizens, the state must ensure their security competence. Only a citizen who possesses security culture can actively contribute to security, thereby enabling continuous development of both himself/herself and the state system.

Culture

Culture, like security, is one of the fundamental elements of human existence and a concept that is likewise difficult to define in a universally accepted way. The word *culture* has a Latin root, whether based on the term *cults*—cultivation, field cultivation; *colere*—to cultivate, nurture, or till; or *cultura*—the cultivation of land (Stanarević & Ejdus, 2009). Over time, the meaning of the term *culture* has evolved and acquired a metaphorical sense: from the cultivation of the land, it transferred to the cultivation of the spirit, from tilling the field to cultivating and refining the human mind (Stanarević & Ejdus, 2009).

Important terms, especially when culture is considered from the perspective of security culture, are *subculture* and *counterculture*. "Both subcultures and countercultures take culture seriously… They understand not only that culture can be a way of articulating political views and perspectives but also that in contemporary society, culture plays a key role in political expression. One of the things to which subcultures and countercultures respond is what they see as a lack of genuine cultural expression and experience in the age of mass culture. In response, they produce their own forms of culture, their own styles of dress, music, and cultural and political practices and articulate new ways of life and behavior" (Szeman & O'Brien, 2017). Subculture is not negative; it pertains to a part of society, and social groups are distinguished from one another according to it (Stajić, Mijalković, & Stanarević, 2006). Counterculture is characterized by the development of values and beliefs that are completely opposed to those of the dominant culture, and its members are often the agents of change within that culture (Miljković & Schramm, 2015).

Today's conflict between traditionalism and globalization, in addition to the population size as an additional negative factor, increases the demand for some form of comprehensive solution that is acceptable and desirable for all parties, regardless of differences. Finally, it should be emphasized that culture is, "according to many scholars, a security issue, examined at all levels of confronting human threats, from the personal, through national, international, and global levels, always rooted in the phenomenon of culture" (Shay, 2023).

Horizontal analysis

Individual security

Individual security is focused on the protection of the individuals and their property. In legal texts, it is encompassed by *the concepts of personal security, the safety of citizens and their property* and *the security protection of human rights and freedoms* (Milosavljević, 2014, p. 102). This is precisely where the previously explained distinction between safety and security comes into play. Therefore, the following discussion will address the significance of security culture in achieving safety (individual security).

When examining the content of security culture, it can be concluded that it equips individuals for both proactive and reactive actions. It should be noted that a person, as an individual and a civilian, can undertake preventive measures against sources of threat, but reactive measures against the actors and forms of threat should be carried out in cooperation with authorized state authorities and under their coordination (if deemed necessary as a result of their assessment). The reason for this lies in legal regulations and the type of training received by the members of security organs, which is not accessible to civilians without special authorization. Regardless of whether it concerns sources, actors, or forms of threat, citizens should inform state authorities and/or appeal through the media based on moral obligation.

To achieve personal security, an individual's security culture equips an individual with knowledge, skills, and information relevant to: *1) Tolerance and equality; 2) Health culture; 3) Environmental culture; 4) Safety in rural and urban environments; 5) Traffic safety; 6) Cybersecurity; 7) Media; 8) Sociopathological phenomena; 9) Natural and technical-technological disasters; 10) Radicalization, extremism, and terrorism; 11) Firearms and explosive devices; 12) Means and devices for personal protection; and 13) The security system* (See: Ćurčić, 2021, pp. 170–171; Stajić, Mijalković, & Stanarević, 2006, pp. 7–11).

Tolerance and equality are essential in the modern era, with a particular emphasis on the internet space, as interactions between different nations, cultures, religions, political orientations, and so on have never been more intensive. The role of security culture in this regard is to foster awareness and awaken empathy through education characterized by interculturality (See: Bjelajac, 2021, p. 14; Drašković Krulj, Marković & Vidosavljević, 2017, p. 91).

Health culture and environmental culture can be addressed simultaneously due to their strong interconnection. Insufficient personal care for one's health and harm to the environment are highly present, and security culture holds value in changing this. The greatest significance of security culture here is in educating and motivating individuals to prevent harm to their health and ecological systems (See: Stajić, 2014, p. 81–82).

Safety in rural and urban environments relates to presence and behavior in the event of accidents (bodily injury, property damage, etc.) and getting lost in unfamiliar spaces (See: Ćurčić, 2021, p. 171). Security culture provides everything necessary to prevent accidents or getting lost, and ensures appropriate responses when such events occur.

Traffic safety—with the increasing number and types of transport vehicles, it demands a greater degree of attention, especially among young people using electric vehicles, such as scooters and e-scooters. Security culture encompasses both pedestrians and vehicle operators.

Cybersecurity (also known as information culture) is today an essential dimension of nearly every individual's life. Security culture raises awareness, equips individuals for comprehensive protection and digital forensics, and incorporates aspects of ethics, sociology, economics, and law (Milanović & Radovanović, 2015, p. 55; Stajić, Radivojević, & Mirković, 2023, pp. 1040–1048).

The media— are an integral part of human life and have been proven to be a powerful tool for exerting both positive and negative influence. Security culture cultivates media-literate

individuals who can safely receive and disseminate information, counter disinformation and misinformation, and conduct fact-checking.

Sociopathological phenomena are (deviant) actions that depart from the generally accepted norms and rules of behavior, causing harm to individuals (See: Subotić & Odalović, 2016, p. 44). They include criminality, addiction-related illnesses, (elite) prostitution, violence (theft, domestic violence, riots at mass gatherings), and destructive sects (Bjelajac & Matijašević, 2013, p. 409; Stajić, 2013, p. 286; Stajić, Mijalković & Stanarević, 2006, pp. 86–119). These phenomena occupy a special place in security culture because an individual can provide significant (psychological) contributions to counteraction, while the state system may not always be able to respond in a timely manner.

Natural and technical-technological disasters remain frequent despite technological development, causing damage to the natural environment, financial and material assets, and human health, with a particular emphasis on mental well-being (fear, nervousness, etc., which hinder individuals and reduce productivity). In this context, security culture draws knowledge from crisis management, equipping individuals for disaster management (Ćurčić, 2021, p. 170).

Radicalization, extremism, and terrorism arise as a consequence of dissatisfaction, frustration, and injustice, involving radical and violent methods and means. Security culture plays an important proactive role here, emphasizing psychology, critical thinking, self-awareness, self-control, early recognition of behavioral changes in others, and trust in institutions. A newer segment of security culture also includes proper behavior in the event of extremist or terrorist attacks.

Firearms and explosive devices are becoming more numerous and more accessible, with increasing war tensions and armed conflicts. Security culture, particularly through military knowledge, skills, and information, explains their dangers and trains individuals for proper handling and safe use when discovered.

Means and devices for personal protection are applied to deter, warn, alert, inform, restrain, and neutralize threats. Security culture introduces and prepares individuals for their use, with a special emphasis on the legal aspect to prevent excessive use of force, violations of privacy, and other issues.

The security system consists of multiple subsystems, both public and secret, and it is necessary to understand, and be familiar with, their functioning. Security culture precisely facilitates this, with particular objectives being the building of trust in the security system, as well as motivating and preparing individuals for cooperation with it. All security CRTs are approached in a manner that answers the questions: *how do they arise?, how can they be prevented?, how can they be recognized?, what are the consequences?* and *how should one respond?*. Thus, security culture truly encompasses the entire security cycle, from prevention, emergence, detection, identification, and informing others, to essential measures and actions, followed by learning and improvement (of procedures, material-technical resources, organizational solutions, etc.) (See: Aćimović, 2025, p. 102).

A significant and interesting aspect is the psychological impact that security culture has on the psychological characteristics and states of the individual. Self-confidence, motivation, and patriotism are highlighted as results of psychological-emotional processes that arise from successfully acquiring and testing new knowledge and skills, as well as from positive examples related to the given state (and its alliances), which are integrated into the content and/or process of forming security culture (See: Aćimović, 2023, pp. 13–15). The physical and health benefits of security culture are related to this, and they emerge as an outcome of knowledge in the fields of health and ecology, as well as from physical activities involved in acquiring and improving skills (time spent in nature, evacuation exercises, etc.) (Aćimović, 2025, p. 98; See: Lipovac, 2021, p. 201).

Accordingly, based on all of the above, it can be concluded that security culture, through equipping individuals to protect themselves from threats, produces a positive psychological-emotional effect. The value of security culture for the individuals and their safety is reflected in the ability to achieve maximum personal protection through the application of relevant knowledge and skills within the framework of the law, as well as through continuous, independent self-improvement. With this said, it can be concluded that security culture in the context of individual security possesses the biggest value for alternative-critical approach, because of its focus on one person's safety. Therefore, the multidisciplinarity of security culture is important, because an individual needs to tend towards independent maintaining of (personal) safety. In addition to that, there is a potential importance of the sectoral approach to security, because it enables a better understanding of the complexity of the modern era and it can be used by anyone. With all this in mind, one more conclusion can be made, and it is that the multidisciplinarity of security culture and the sectoral approach to security push an individual to higher levels of analysis of certain domains, i.e. security approaches dealing with concrete topics (nuclear security, political security, ecological security etc.).

Societal security

In line with the previously explained evolution of security approaches, particularly the transition from the classical approach where the state with military power is the referent object, it is necessary to highlight the definitions of two representatives of the Copenhagen School of security, characterized by the so-called sectoral approach (military, political, economic, *societal* and environmental) (Ejdus, 2012, p. 114). Specifically, societal security, defined by Buzan (Buzan, 1991, pp. 122–123), refers to "the sustainable development of traditional patterns of language, culture, religious and national identities, as well as state customs". On the other hand, Waever states that it is "the ability of a society to preserve its essential characteristics amid changing circumstances and despite potential or actual threats" (Waever, et al., 1993, p. 23).

The contribution of security culture to societal security is essentially realized through all the segments that contribute to individual security, since everything originates from the individual. An important conclusion is that "the first knowledge and contents of security culture are acquired within the family, then expanded during schooling, supplemented in the workplace, shaped by cultural identity and patterns, immediate environment, and self-reflected through the character and development of the individual's positive personality" (Savić & Stajić, 2006, p. 76). *The family* is the first social environment, a group with which an individual first comes into contact, and therefore it is important that the principles of security culture are respected within it and that the necessary content is practiced. It should be recalled that the family is the basic unit of any society, and for it to survive, it must be protected both internally by its members and externally by other "units" and the state system itself. Regarding *schooling*, the contents of security culture are presented either as a separate academic subject or partially integrated within several "classic" subjects (Aćimović, 2025, p. 98). As for the *work environment*, the presence of security culture is found in all areas of human activity (politics, economy, sports, medicine, science, education, media, etc.) (Stajić, Mijalković, & Stanarević, 2005, pp. 29–32). In this sense, it is logical that derived terms should appear: nuclear, health, police, military security culture, and others (Stajić & Lazić, 2015, p. 95). *Cultural identities and patterns* certainly rest on the history, tradition, culture, and language of a people, but they must be transmitted, i.e., built in accordance with security culture. This is because security culture provides protection for the cultural identity and patterns from threats posed by members of other nations. Likewise, security culture explains how to present one's cultural identity and patterns in a way that does not threaten other peoples, which plays a major role in proactive behavior. The *immediate environment* consists of all the previous elements, of course including people, events, and processes with which one is in direct contact. However, the awareness created by security culture comes to the fore, encompassing much more than the immediate environment, and it is important because it is maintained in the immediate environment through the individual. *The*

character and the developed positive personality of the individual are the overall product of natural individuality, as well as the influence of the family, the work environment, and all that with which a person comes into (in)direct contact.

Considering the above, the knowledge, skills, and information of significance can be highlighted for: *1) Socialization and unity; 2) Functional capacity of organizational collectives; 3) Social conflict; 4) Disasters, crises, emergencies, and wartime conditions;* and *5) Protection and promotion of social values.*

Socialization and unity are based on the essential importance of security for life and development, the irrefutable fact that humans are social beings, and the observation that it is one of the most searched terms on the Internet (Simović, 2022, p. 11; Aćimović, 2025, p. 98, 102).

Functional capacity of organizational collectives (both state and non-state) entails understanding the importance of organizational structure, respecting the system of subordination, adhering to work rules, and a proper conduct in crisis situations. Viewed from a strategic level, security culture in this context should contribute to understanding policies, strategies, laws, regulations, and action plans, as well as to enhancing overall societal engagement. At the operational level, security culture should enable organizational leadership to correctly present set objectives and expectations for subordinates, as well as to build trust and awareness (Dojkovski et al., 2010). At the lowest, tactical level, security culture should increase motivation, strengthen the sense of belonging, and thereby enhance safety and productivity at work. Social conflict based on cultural, religious, and economic differences can be considered a key "target" of societal security culture. Here, issues such as racism, discrimination, mass gatherings, demonstrations, radicalization, extremism, and terrorism become evident (Vidi: Stajić & Lazić, 2015, p. 98). Security culture plays a crucial role not only in identifying and preventing the escalation of conflicts but also in addressing the root causes of societal clashes through respect for the norms and the group itself (Bjelajac, 2021, p. 12). Disasters, crises, emergencies, and wartime conditions are particularly significant because they affect the entire society (directly, indirectly, psychologically, health-wise, security-wise, financially, etc.). Through training, security culture fosters awareness of the obligation to contribute to preventing their occurrence and spread, as well as mitigating the damage.

Protection and promotion of social values is an integral part of life and a goal of all people regardless of their place of residence. Security culture creates a perception of a safe way to protect and promote social values essentially, how to do so without endangering members of other communities or society as a whole in a given territory.

The conclusion is that the development, especially the improvement and implementation of security culture, positively impacts socialization and the unification of people by enabling safe collective living, with an emphasis on values and proactive and reactive actions in response to social conflicts. In this context, security culture can achieve the greatest results, i.e. contribute the most to security in the organization of the security system which entails a combination of state and societal protection mechanisms in systems that incorporate certain forms of socialization of the security function. The alternative-critical approach must also be mentioned here, as it explains the transition from the state analysis to both the individual and social groups. Besides that, "collective societal" security culture should encourage every social group and society in total to analyze and act through the framework of the sectoral approach to security, i.e to create a comprehensive assessment of not just certain security CRTs but also the situation and needs of society.

National security

The analysis of the term *national security* encompasses a certain social group with its values and identity on the one hand, and security, which is traditionally associated with the state, on

the other (See: Savić & Stajić, 2006, p. 31). Stanarević emphasizes that "national security can be understood as the ability of a state (nation) to survive by protecting its territorial integrity and sovereignty, achieving political independence, and using state attributes to safeguard its internal values from threats that may arise externally or internally" (2012, p. 29).

Since *everything originates from the individual*, national security has a particular dimension here due to the authority and responsibilities, especially of those in the highest positions related to the management of state institutions and services (head of state, prime minister, ministers, etc.). Savić and Stajić explain that in a national security system, security culture as a part of the system's function can also be defined as "a set of informal professional norms and values that operate within a hierarchical security organizational structure, in the function of executing security tasks" (Savić & Stajić, 2006, p. 76). Considering the specificities of security services, as bearers of so-called secret security, the potential violation of constitutionally guaranteed rights and freedoms of citizens, and exposure to stress and pressures (both work-related and private), an important conclusion is that "security culture helps define the relationships of security service members toward each other and their relation to the external environment (other social systems)" (Savić & Stajić, 2006, p. 76). Furthermore, security culture contributes to the effectiveness of the operational work of security organs through knowledge of criminal subculture and the subculture of violence (Savić & Stajić, 2006, p. 77).

The following stand out: *1) The ability to carry out state duties more safely and effectively; 2) Disasters, crises, and states of emergency or war; 3) Protection and promotion of social values; and 4) "Internal collective" security*.

The ability to perform state duties more safely and effectively implies that the knowledge and skills of security culture enable a person to adapt in a shorter period to a new work environment, with an understanding of the main security threats, risks, and processes (IRP) specific to the workplace and the practical application of security culture accordingly. The real benefits of its application and awareness of them should also reflect on work efficiency.

Disasters, crises, and states of emergency and war retain the explanation from the previous section on societal security, but with an emphasis that the full contribution of citizens is enabled by security culture, developed through the state education system. It is important to understand the potential consequences of thoughtless, politicized statements and unjustified comments that obscure or amplify security implications.

Protection and promotion of social values have a special dimension from the perspective of the state administration, in terms of not only the aforementioned powers and responsibilities but also the obligations arising from internal and international acts, as well as moral duties. The state apparatus, through its security, educational, and cultural elements, achieves the most comprehensive insight into social conditions, and therefore possesses the greatest responsibility and capacity for their protection and promotion of values.

"Internal collective" security refers to the "security causality" that exists among all actors at different levels who practice security culture. Thus, anyone who counters threats within their capacities, legal frameworks, and strategic documents, while respecting the principles of security culture, contributes to the security of the entire nation.

The value of security culture for national security lies in improving the results of performing state duties, crisis management, care for society, and the causality of internal security. Analyzed from the perspective of the realism approach, security culture can influence it in two ways: 1) by strengthening the realism through creating a national curriculum of security culture which focuses only on the state as a referent object of security, and only on military threats as referent threats; and 2) by weakening the realism through enabling the understanding of the variety of security CRTs and the importance of other subjects, such as international institutions for non-military CRTs (climate changes, food safety etc.), societal groups and individuals, i.e. that the

state is no longer the only referent object of security. Based on that, security culture in the context of national security should contribute to the liberal-institutional approach, which is international cooperation in the sphere of politics, economy, culture etc. In a logical way, it also contributes to achieving the aims of the alternative-critical approach, such as the minimization of endangerment of societal and individual security as a consequence of systemic deficiencies of the state and the existing global order. By this, we mean that security culture should represent a special two-way channel of communication with social groups and individuals. That channel needs to be characterized by trust, ability, and motivation to confront security CRTs, while standing on core principles of security culture. When it comes to the sectoral approach, the state already consists of various sectors (ministries, agencies etc.), but security culture can contribute to intense cooperation between them, while creating more trust and motivation.[1]

Conclusions and recommendations

In a vertical analysis, by examining the key meanings of the elements of security culture—security as life and culture as life with others—it can be concluded that security culture represents a combination of knowledge and skills essential for the survival of the human species. It directs people toward research and development across various spheres, which, in turn, causes mutual interaction. Considering the existing conclusion that the security function of the state is service-oriented, it follows that *security education is a service function, security culture the product, and the application of security culture the means by which the state, indirectly through citizens, addresses various forms of threats*. A horizontal analysis has shown where the value of security culture manifests and why and how its significance varies according to the type and segment of security. In the domain of individual security, psychological-emotional benefits are emphasized as a result of acquiring knowledge, skills, and information crucial for self-protection. Moreover, it can be concluded that security culture in the context of individual security is closely connected with the alternative-critical approach, the sectoral approach to security, and security approaches to certain domains. At a higher level, the level of societal security, positive effects on socialization, and the unification of people are emphasized, emerging through the dissemination of behavioral patterns and the exchange of content relevant to collective life. This enables safe collective functioning, with a particular emphasis placed on the promotion and preservation of cultural values, as well as the prevention and resolution of social conflicts. On this level of security, it is estimated that security culture achieves the greatest impact in a security system which entails a combination of state and societal protection mechanisms in systems that incorporate certain forms of socialization of the security function. Besides that, the alternative-critical and the sectoral approaches were also estimated as those which produced the best effects. At the highest level, the level of national security, the greatest impact is seen in the efficiency of performing state duties, crisis management, the functioning of society, and overall internal security. Here, security culture can influence the realistic approach in two ways, by strengthening or weakening it, and can contribute to the liberal-institutional, alternative-critical approach and intense cooperation by unifying the sectoral approach to security. Combined, these analyses indicate that security culture is a socio-scientific causal factor that the entire living world experiences daily. The primary causal chain exists between security and culture, then between the actions of individuals and social groups, and finally between the mechanisms of the state system and society or the individual. From all this, it follows that security culture should be an essential part of human knowledge and skills, as only through it can one realize one's full potential and contribute to the world. Consequently, the hypothesis is confirmed that security culture represents a significant and distinctive factor in the realization of individual, societal, and national security, as well as for implementation of different approaches to security.

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[1] This is especially refered to security system and its security agencies, which are, due to the nature of their work, already closed and very sensitive on sharing information and data.

From the perspective of approaches to security, it is concluded that the state needs to form and develop security culture among citizens, because: 1) The traditional way of protection, which relies on the security system and its professional members, is not sufficient for the state and societal security, especially for a complete protection of individual; and 2) The state possesses the power of action, the greatest resources and access to data, enabling comprehensive assessments of conditions and needs. However, this conclusion does not exclude independent engagement of an individual in the development of security culture. As a matter of fact, the independent development of security culture by an individual is also needed, because: 1) Despite the previous explanation, the state cannot develop a security culture for each individual constantly throughout their life; and 2) Individuality is a combination of psychological and physical traits given by birth, attitudes built on the foundations of personal experiences, and aspirations for the future. In conclusion, a progress of the individual, society and state system and a fast development of security CRTs of the modern world demand a constant joint engagement of the individual, societal groups, and the state system. However, considering all the characteristics of these three subjects and the history lessons from different arrangements of relationships, the state system needs to have the main role in providing security and security education, i.e. in the formation and development of security culture. In this way, building security culture should be characterized as a mass, efficient, strategic action of educational nature and security purpose. The concept of its construction (state system—society—individual) should guarantee the minimization of intentional and unintentional endangerment of individual, societal and national security. A special emphasis should be placed on their mutual dependence, causal relationship, and possibility of (internal) influence on the other subject, which threatens, or has already endangered, the security of other subject/s.

Finally, this paper contributes: 1) to the existing knowledge, primarily of the Serbian scientific fond, through its systematization in one place and by putting it in a new frame; 2) by analysis of the relationship between security culture and certain types and approaches to security, based on the criteria of their characteristics, and in terms of the value and the effects of security culture on them; and 3) through the creation of a concept for formation and development of security culture, based on the criteria of the types of subjects, their value, and the internal relationships in that process.

Regarding future research directions, special attention should be paid to creating empirical material to examine the significance of security culture for the psychophysical state of individuals, particularly considering the increasing number of psychological issues among the youth and the impact of those issues on the body. Furthermore, optimal models of integrated engagement between the education system and the security system, as well as other significant systems such as healthcare and legal frameworks, should be considered in the development of a dedicated educational subject aimed at fostering security culture.

Conflict of interest declaration

Conflict of interest

The author declares that he has no known competing financial interests, institutional affiliations, or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Data availability statement

Data are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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This paper, i.e., its subject, does not involve research on living beings and does not require ethics committee approval.

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AI tools were not used to generate or alter empirical data, to produce analytical results, or to shape the study's core findings and conclusions.

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