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Editorial Notes

The Faculty of Security - Skopje has continuously developed its educational and research work, and it is based on the basic values of the quality of scientific and professional activities and applied principles of ethics, independence, impartiality, relevance and research excellence.

Scientific and professional activity is the driving force behind the development of scientific thoughts, with which man, as an intelligent being, realizes it as a creative activity, which is formed and continuously grows, thus enhancing human existence, development in a technical-technological sense and in general social supremacy over natural forces and adaptation to one's own needs and overall human development in societies, and it is reflected through the results of the activities. Therefore, scientific and research activity is a clear indicator of civilizational achievements of today's society, and its development indicates general civilizational growth and development. Current social goods and prosperity are a direct consequence of scientific and research activities and the great progress of scientific thought.

Faculty of Security - Skopje has security as a basic requirement, which is expressed through personal, collective and global security, in all spheres of social life, as the subject of its scientific activities.

The publication "Faculty of Security - Skopje" is already of legal age and has been published continuously for 20 years. It is an expression of the constant progress of scientific and professional thoughts of the teaching and collaborative staff of our institution, but also of very eminent researchers from other institutions whose subject is security research and related areas, who have recognized the value and significance of this publication.

The scientific journal "International Yearbook of the Faculty of Security - Skopje" contains scientific papers that deal with current, contemporary topics and issues in the social sciences, with a special focus on security, but also papers of an interdisciplinary nature, with the application of new methodological approaches and the development of critical thinking in scientific and professional practice. Works have been reviewed by local and international experts in this field.

I would like to express my gratitude to the employees of the Faculty of Security - Skopje for their dedication and contribution to the previous and current editions in order to maintain continuity and meet the criteria for an international scientific journal. Of course, thanks to everyone who has already published works in our publication.

In the hope of teaching the development of scientific and professional thoughts, I would like to motivate my colleagues from academic and professional fields to participate in future editions.

Sincerely,

Chief editor, prof. Dr. Zlate Dimovski

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PROCEDURES OF PRIVATE SECURITY AGENCIES FOR THE SAFE HOLDING OF SPORTS EVENTS, PUBLIC ASSEMBLIES AND MANIFESTATIONS

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Abstract

In the last two decades, the Republic of North Macedonia has witnessed a gradual expansion and progress in the democratization of society. As an inevitable consequence of the transition, the emergence and operation of a larger number of political parties, privatization, the emergence of a large number of socially endangered groups of citizens, and the military conflict, as well as the continuous political struggle for supremacy and the large number of political and social protests, have occurred. All this led to an increase in the number of cases of violent, demolishing, and destructive behavior of citizens, which most often ended with clashes between citizens and the police in public places. However, organized gatherings of citizens also took place on other occasions, in a sports, musical, solidarity, or other context, which still require services to maintain order and peace. Such a situation has also been transferred to the holding of various cultural and sports events. There has been a need to involve "police" services that will maintain order before, during, and after the gatherings, while the police services will react in specific situations where they are not able to establish order and the situation gets out of control. Until then, security personnel, the so-called police services, are organized to monitor and maintain the situation within the framework of normality.

The paper will cover the standard procedures for security negotiation, planning, preparation, implementation, and post-implementation procedures of an event where private security will be engaged, in order to harmonize and simplify procedures and achieve efficiency, effectiveness, and quality implementation of tasks.

Keywords: private security, security plan, security measures

Introduction

Private security agencies, in accordance with the Law on Private Security[1], have the legal opportunity to secure public gatherings, sports competitions, and events. This right is given to agencies that provide services. In accordance with the conceptual and categorical apparatus in the law, "securing public gatherings and other events" is physical security with private security workers and with the use of technical means for the purpose of maintaining public order at public gatherings, sports competitions, cultural, entertainment, religious, humanitarian, social, political, economic, and other events.

The Law on Private Security has regulated this activity and stipulates that a legal entity that provides private security in the form of providing services may perform work to maintain public order at public gatherings, sports competitions, cultural, entertainment, religious, humanitarian, social, political, economic, and other events with security workers and using technical means and devices in accordance with the regulations on public gatherings and preventing violence at sports competitions. Security workers wear work clothes and vests with reflective stripes on which the inscription "Security" is written. During the performance of work to maintain public order, security workers may not regulate traffic. Security workers perform their work without firearms.

When a legal entity maintains public order at a public gathering or event and for that purpose engages more than five security workers, the responsible person in the legal entity is obliged to develop a plan for securing the event, which is submitted to the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the area where the public gathering or event is being held, no later than 48 hours before the gathering or event. The plan must contain: the place and time of the public gathering or event being secured; the number and schedule of the security workers engaged; data on the person who will manage the security workers during the holding of the public gathering or event; and the means of communication with this person.

Preparation and implementation of Event Security

Event security refers to security when five (5) or more security workers are engaged. Security refers to public gatherings, manifestations in the fields of culture, entertainment, religious, economic, political, etc. gatherings of a large number of citizens, or sports competitions. Security refers to the physical and technical protection of a certain space (open or closed), public order and peace, as well as individuals (from politics, economics, cultural or entertainment life – VIPs).

The procedure for planning, performing and executing security begins with a submitted (oral or written) request from a client (natural or legal entity) for the realization of a service –event security. The client most often appears as the organizer of the event, part of the organizational structure, members of a certain organization (governmental or non-governmental), religious communities, trade union organizations, political parties, wings of political entities, federations, clubs, individuals, etc. This is followed by the organization of

[1]Law on Private Security ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 166/12), Law on Amending and Supplementing the Law on Private Security ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 164/13), Law on Amending and Supplementing the Law on Private Security ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 148/15), Law on Amending and Supplementing the Law on Private Security ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 193/15), Law on Amending and Supplementing the Law on Private Security ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 55/16) and Law on Amending the Law on Private Security ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 302/20).

a meeting with the client, which should be attended by authorized person(s) from the service requester, with authorization to negotiate and sign a service agreement, and representatives from the security agency, also authorized to negotiate and sign service agreements.

At the meeting, in addition to the introductory part and the definition of the service in terms of the type of event, required resources, and the type and content of the service, it is necessary to provide data about the client. The data about the client should not be secret or conspiratorial, but should accurately indicate who and what the client is, in order to be able to realize the service of event security. Identification data are provided by the responsible person appointed by the client to organize and realize the event, in order to confirm the seriousness of the request. The name and surname of the person present are required, as well as the name of the legal entity-client, the tax number (EDB), the personal identification number (EMBG) of the person responsible, bank account, and the method and type of further communication. It would be advisable if, already at the meeting, the client designates a person for further communication for the necessary coordination and agreement of details.

At the meeting, the client (organizer, service customer) is obliged to present all data about the planned event for which security services are being requested. It is important to determine the type of event, whether it is a sports competition, cultural, entertainment, religious, economic, political, or other event. Determining the exact date and time is very important, as is the planned time interval for the duration of the event. The specific agenda of the event may be provided immediately at the meeting or later within the framework of coordination communication, with the attendees indicated in the official part, as well as possible other attendees who may come to the event and who are of particular importance. Above all, it is important to determine their role (conference participant, person who will officially open the event, guest of honor, etc.). This information is necessary for further planning and deployment of security forces, particularly in reinforcing human and technical resources at locations where important persons are present, who may influence the event, calm the attendees, or, conversely, provoke inappropriate behavior.

Important elements that need to be obtained as basic knowledge are:

– Why is the event being held? Here, the reasons corresponding to the importance and vitality of holding the event must be identified;

– Who will be the stakeholders of the event? These include internal stakeholders, such as the board of directors, management, staff, and the audience or guests, as well as external stakeholders, such as the media and politicians;

– When will the event be held? Is there enough time to research and plan the event?

– Where will the event be held? The choice of venue must represent the best possible compromise between the organizational needs of the event, the comfort of the visitors, accessibility and costs;

– What is the content of the event or the purpose of the event?

Additional questions that need to be clarified are:

– Who are the participants in the event – individuals, groups, teams, associations;

– Data on the participants of the event – previous participations, destructive scenarios, abnormal behaviors, provocative behavior, calls for destruction, additional plans or elaborated scenarios for disruption of events or injury to the space or the people present;

– Method of attendance – tickets, invitations, passes, identification documents, free access and attendance, etc.;

– Expected number of people present, according to the client’s knowledge or the capacity of the facility where the event will be held;

– Presence of VIPs who enjoy security from official state bodies, personal security, or other types of security; people who are important for the event but do not enjoy additional security, their companions, etc.;

– Presence of accredited journalistic teams with cameras, in person, or the presence of people from other public media, freelance reporters, etc.;

– The presence of police forces, fire brigades, and medical services is an important part of the knowledge about the event, because they also require an appropriate plan and resources for deployment, as well as an agreement on action and procedures in cases of disruption of public order and peace at the event;

– If it is a sports match, important information includes the presence of the visiting team (their number), their supporters, fans, relatives, and friends of the players, etc.

– Important information is information about the space where the event will take place (if it is an open space), the facility (if it is an indoor facility), or another place that could be a combination of open and indoor space. In order to make a realistic and optimal assessment of needs, to determine the number of people, resources and equipment, it is very important to obtain the following data about the space/facility:

– Location of the event, the limits within which the planned attendees will move or be present, the method of marking the space, access roads and the method of organizing entry into the limited space, agreement onexpansion if the space becomes too small for all attendees, and the method and location of reception/entry and exit from the event;

– If it is a closed facility, what is the size of the facility? In principle, all built facilities intended for occasional or permanent presence of people, in accordance with their construction documentation, have a maximum permitted number of occupants. Any exceeding of this number carries a risk for everyone. Certain facilities have special areas for accommodating attendees that may be limited, fenced or arranged on floors, so information is needed on the number of floors/storeys, the capacity of each separate and accessible area for entry and exit, and, of course, additional measures in case of the need for evacuation for various reasons.

– Configuration and placement of the facility/space in relation to access roads, other critical infrastructure facilities, family homes, or other privately owned facilities or spaces, damage to which could cause major harm to facilities, people or safety in general. This includes proximity to potentially dangerous areas in situations of group euphoria or the creation of a “stampede” (rivers, lakes, excavated deep areas, military or police facilities, etc.). These aspects should be especially emphasized for the purpose of deploying a sufficient number of personnel and equipment in order to prevent injuries or loss of life, as well as irreparable damage to property or general safety;

– Infrastructure in and around the facility. Are there other business facilities or equipment within the same facility where the event will be held;

– Layout of the premises – press centers, meeting rooms, VIP box, guest team, guest spectators, etc.

The data obtained about the space that will be subject to security, the number and profile of attendees, and the type of event form the basis for building a security assessment for the event. In this context, the responsible persons begin by developing the assessment. The data about the event itself require predicting the optimal number of people who will be engaged. There are situations in which the client himself determines how many people will be needed to secure the event, but such a practice should be avoided before a security assessment is conducted by the security agency.

Clients/organizers of event, particularly when the event is profitable for the client requesting security services (sports competitions, concert), often make their own assessment according to the principle of engaging fewer people and fewer resources for the security agency. However, they often fail to take into account that once the security agency concludes a contract for securing the event, in accordance with its provisions, responsibility for all security-related aspects is assumed by the security agency. This approach may be acceptable when the event is of "low" risk and there is no anticipated disruption of the planned agenda. However, if the client acts in this manner and, for various reasons, does not believe in or is not aware of certain "black" scenarios, the security agency may not be able to respond appropriately to a situation that arises. In such cases, when the organizer is decisive and convinced that no such scenarios exist, it would be advisable to foresee a provision in the contract itself in order to avoid bearing responsibility, in accordance with the positive legal regulations of the Republic of North Macedonia.

Therefore, the best approach is to obtain data from the client and for the security agency itself to conduct a security assessment, including information about the broader security situation in the region and the country, current events, and information received about planned security violations, in general, throughout the territory of the country, in specific areas, or at the event itself. A serious approach is required in building such an assessment. It should include:

– Required resources

– An estimate of the required number of security workers to carry out the security;

– Required material and technical means;

– Methods and means of communication, internally and externally;

– Preparation of passes or other necessary documents for identifying security personnel (in addition to vests bearing the inscription "Security", which is a legal obligation);

– Additional forces kept in reserve, with material and technical means, for action in situations where the foreseen and engaged resources show weaknesses or an inability to control the situation due to unforeseen circumstances.

Consequently, the totality of actions that precede or follow the realization of the event must be planned in advance, because it is incorrect to plan only the holding of the event itself. The obligation of the security agency is to deploy its forces a sufficient period of time before the start and holding of the event. Even in the case of an event with a "high" risk, deployment may take place one or several days before the event, all with the aim of achieving a complete overview of the activities of all persons present during those time intervals, who may have specific constructive or destructive intentions. In this context, it is necessary to clearly agree on these matters with the client/organizer, with clear guidelines and pre-agreed procedures, in order to avoid unwanted conflict situations with persons who carry out logistics and event preparation activities and are not part of the security agency.

For this purpose, external security is organized. The space intended for holding the event (open space), if large, must be divided into several zones, to which an appropriate number of security personnel will be assigned and given specific tasks for handling and controlling the space. Any unusual situation or action by attendees of any kind must be immediately reported to the responsible person, even if the event has not yet started or there is still significant time before the official beginning of the scheduled part of the event. Such procedures are monitored by appropriately positioned personnel who react to any inappropriate behavior or action, primarily through patrol activities.

Internal security involves planning an appropriate number of personnel who will be assigned tasks for the realization of the event in locations that are considered critical for the safe conduct of the event within the facility itself or within the precisely designated space if it is an open area. In accordance with several parameters and criteria, an optimal number of security personnel is assigned. Their schedule, concentration, type of deployment model, and manner of action will be explained later as part of the tactical approach.

The control of the means of transportation used to transport officials specified in the agenda, as well as other persons present at the event, may be classified as external security. However, due to its specifics, this area requires separate planning, including access methods, routines, arrival and departure routes, and securing of the vehicles. This is regulated by agreement with the client and adequately planned in the operational plan for the realization of the event. What is prohibited by the Law on Private Security is the regulation of traffic by security agency personnel. This means that security personnel may not replace traffic police officers, who are the only ones authorized to regulate traffic in all areas.

For the purposes of security agencies, and for better understanding, it is necessary to explain what traffic control and regulation include. Since the law prohibits security personnel from regulating traffic, they may not be stationed on highways, main and regional roads, nor may they give signals to regulate traffic or conduct traffic control. However, in situations where a security agency has a contract for securing an event, security personnel may take measures to regulate and control vehicles within the designated parking area (outer perimeter), assuming full responsibility for that area, but they may not act outside it. Allowing them to regulate traffic outside the designated area would create overlap with the work of the traffic police, leading to confusion among drivers and difficulties in complying with traffic rules and regulations.

Within the designated vehicle parking area, security personnel will have the right and obligation to act according to the situation or instructions of the person responsible for the event and to direct traffic participants to appropriate locations and routes in order to ensure the safe conduct of the event. Such procedures allow priority access and ensure that the vehicles of officials are parked in the safest locations, thereby avoiding unwanted encounters, actions, or incidents.

In coordination with law enforcement institutions, security personnel must be familiar with the procedures implemented by persons who are not in official police uniform. Members of the civilian staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the operational staff of the National Security Agency, or other services and agencies, once they identify and legitimize themselves as members of official services, must be allowed access to the external or internal space secured by the security agency. These services may undertake various actions, and at official events attended by persons who enjoy legal personal security, they will certainly carry out counter-sabotage protection measures and inspection of the area. The area subject to inspection may be within the perimeter agreed with the security agency, but it may also be outside it, which is their legal right and obligation.

In such cases, it is necessary to allow them to perform all actions they deem appropriate, even if security personnel from the agency have already been deployed to secure the area. The person responsible for securing the event from the security agency must be informed of their presence. After counter-sabotage or other inspections are completed, these services may either leave their own personnel to secure the area or, in coordination with the responsible person from the security agency, instruct security personnel to pay special attention to specific elements during the event. In such cases, security personnel must act in accordance with the indications or orders received from authorized officials.

In order to ensure complete protection of all persons present at the event, security agency personnel must be familiar with, and trained in, fire protection procedures. All preventive measures provided for in the facility or space must be strictly respected, and any observed deviations must be addressed by warning the responsible persons and pointing out unauthorized actions. Security personnel must also be familiar with the fire extinguishing equipment, including its location, type, distance to other equipment, and the existence of central hydrant system. Preventive fire protection measures must be respected by everyone, including security personnel, members of official services, law enforcement bodies, and citizens.

This paper addresses the totality of fire and explosion protection measures in order to familiarize the management team of security agencies responsible for people and facilities. This will enable them to request sketches and explanations of fire protection systems in facilities where events are planned. The goal is to explicitly state in the service agreement any elements that are not in compliance with the legal fire protection regulations, in order to avoid liability for the agency providing the service, particularly in cases where inadequate conditions could lead to the occurrence or escalation of fires.

Preparation of a Security Plan

The security plan for an event or events must be an act that provides a complete overview of the activities envisaged in the agency's engagement agreement, with designated actions before the start, during, and after the completion of the event, including departure from the event location.

A security plan is understood as an assessment of the security situation in relation to threats to the secured facility or persons, as well as the security measures that will be taken and implemented.

Before initiating the process of securing an event, persons and facilities, a realistic assessment must be made of data concerning phenomena and events related to possible security threats. By monitoring the carriers of threats, their influence, strength, and the means they use, appropriate measures should be developed and implemented to eliminate or remove the circumstances under which such threats arise.

Based on observations and knowledge obtained through conversations and negotiations with the event organizers, first, the existing carriers of threats to the life, health and activities of the organizers and participants (core) of the event are first identified. Then, depending on the nature of the event, political affiliation, or other relevant factors, attitudes and characteristic data, an assessment is made of which forms of security threats and their carriers may appear at the event.

Preventive activity also includes a security assessment of the level of vulnerability of the protected event, including the persons and the facility. Based on this assessment and the identified level of vulnerability, the existing security plan is developed or modified[2].

The security assessment is prepared in the form of a written document and represents an integral part of the security plan. It presents the current security situation, forecasts future developments, and specifies the tasks and measures necessary to eliminate causes, methods of confrontation, and preventive actions in order to prevent threats to the security of the event, persons, and the facility.

[2]Stajic, Lj., Pajkovic, D., *System Protection of Persons and Objects*, Faculty of Law, Novi Sad, 2008, p. 86.

A security assessment represents a set of knowledge and conclusions acquired with the participation of relevant entities and evaluated through an appropriate procedure[3].

A security assessment is an analytical-synthetic, operational-expert, and most often operational document. The analytical assessment of the security situation refers to the identification and comparative analysis of all negative security events (potential threat carriers, their actions, intentions, and the probability of their action), as well as the assessment of one's own capacities to resolve security challenges. For the preparation of a security assessment, it is essential to ensure an adequate amount of high-quality data, their consistent recording, a unified methodological approach to security data assessment, and comparability of the security situation in the monitored area. This enables the development of conclusions that directly influence the planning, organization and implementation of appropriate security and protection measures. The objective is to neutralize or minimize the likelihood of threats to the security of the event. The security assessment must reflect the real situation, be realistic, and serve at the foundational document of the security plan that defines measures and actions for the protection of people and facilities.

The assessment of the security situation represents a link between the collection, analysis, and processing of data on one side and decision-making on the other, with the aim of preventing violations of the security of specific events.

Due to the type and nature of security, each event is continuously exposed to serious security risks and threats, and the level of danger arising from them varies. Therefore, it is of particular importance to provide conditions that ensure a high level of protection, both for the security personnel involved in the procedure (security workers) and for the general public (persons within the facilities where entry and exit occur, as well as all citizens who are present or may accidentally find themselves at the event location).

The term risk refers to an assumed, expected, forecasted, or possible future action, occurrence, or omission, caused by a person, a technological process, or a natural phenomenon, which under certain conditions, reasons, or circumstances may cause a form of threat to people, property, or other cultural or natural values. Risk should be understood as a condition that precedes the emergence of a threat.

The concept of risk[4] is a means through which people understand or address dangers and uncertainties in the course of life. Risk represents the expectation of an unwanted event in relation to an external occurrence, actor, or structural condition. In this sense, risk is connected to reality and social conditions. From a security perspective, risk represents a condition that precedes the realization of threats[5].

A threat is an opportunity for an individual or group to carry out an action that exploits a vulnerability. The term threat[6] refers to an unwanted, intentional or unintentional event that can cause harm to a certain subject. The threat most often exploits the vulnerability of the person or object to which it is directed. Risk is the probability that a certain person or persons will be exposed to danger. Threats and risks can cause various types of harm, namely to physical integrity, territorial, moral, and legal integrity, as well as violations of norms and rules and violations of dignity. Such harm may result in injury or death, trauma, damage to homes, social relationships, values and beliefs or convictions, as well as damage to the

[3]Krstic, S., *Security Assessment of Threats to Certain Persons*, Millennium Group, Belgrade, 2012, p. 65.

[4]For more on risks, see: Spaseski, J., Nikolovski, M., Gerasimoski, S., *Security Systems – a Contribution to the Study of Security Systems*, Skopje, 2010.

[5]Georgieva, L.: *Risk Management*, Faculty of Philosophy, Skopje, 2006, pp. 81-83

[6]Spaseski, J., Aslimoski P., Gerasimoski, S., *Private Security*, University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Police Academy – Skopje, Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality – Ohrid, Skopje-Ohrid, 2008, p. 109.

natural environment, the economy and infrastructure[7].

Risks and threats structured in this manner are qualified as general attacks or damage. For each event, it is necessary to take into account possible actions that could, in addition to hindering, interrupting, or preventing the event, escalate into large-scale destruction and cause harm to those present, to their physical and vital integrity, as well as to the other elements previously mentioned. Therefore, the need to always consider threats and risks when preparing a security plan for an event is an unavoidable and urgent task.

Whenever security issues are addressed, it is necessary to keep in mind the thought of Vladimir Vodinelić, one of the founders of criminal sciences, that it is necessary to continuously |suspect and doubt every fact, phenomenon, person, and object and to expect danger. Under this assumption, mistakes in the planning phase can be avoided, which will later be reflected in the safety of the event being secured. It must always be assumed that unplanned actions may occur and may contribute to irreparable damage to the event, individuals, and the social community as a whole.

Hazard may also be understood as a component of risk. It can be categorized as natural, technical, anthropogenic (caused by a human factor), nuclear, environmental, etc. Hazard has the potential to cause serious negative impacts that may result in emergencies, crisis and catastrophe. Under such conditions, security operations take place in significantly more difficult circumstances.

Danger can be measured or assessed during the preparation of a security assessment if the elements exposed to its negative effects are identified, such as determining in which situations and during which periods the security process of the event may be endangered[8]. The more detailed the information available to the person responsible for preparing the security assessment, the greater the ability to access the negative potential of the hazard.

Therefore, in order to identify risks, threats and dangers, it is necessary to conduct a security assessment before the process of securing the event begins, more precisely during the preparation of the operational security plan. Any security assessment of event threats must start from the assumption that a certain person at the event may be attacked. First, an assessment of the overall security situation at the state level is conducted, or an assessment of the security situation in the region, municipality, or settlement, depending on the scope and nature of the event. Risk, as a future and uncertain event, can be assessed and the degree of danger arising from it can be determined, allowing for the implementation of additional security measures.

Security risk and threat assessment is an extremely important component that enables security personnel to successfully manage emerging security challenges and ensure the highest possible level of event protection. Such an assessment allows authorized officials to plan response activities in advance in the event of specific security incidents.

The purpose of developing and applying a security risk assessment is to create conditions for making efficient and effective decisions in the process of protecting the event, people, property, and operations, based on a comprehensive assessment of risks related to the entire event. This contributes to the proper protection and security of the event, as well as of all persons directly or indirectly involved in or affected by the process.

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[7]Kvigin, T., *Seeing the Invisible: National Security Intelligence in an Uncertain Age*, Magor, Skopje, 2009, p. 25.

[8]Keković, Z., Bakreski, O., Stefanoski, S., Pavlović, S., "Planning and Risk Assessment for the Protection of Persons, Property and Operations", Chamber of the Republic of Macedonia for Private Security, Skopje, 2016, p. 73.

The standard risk assessment procedure consists of: identifying assets; assessing threats; assessing vulnerabilities; prioritizing risks; and determining and implementing countermeasures[9].

Such a security assessment serves as the basis for decision-making and for the development of a security plan, that is, a document that precisely defines the measures to be undertaken to protect specific individuals. The effectiveness of security depends, among other factors, on the validity of the decisions name, which in turn depends on the quality of the assessment. This also highlights the need to improve security assessment methods and the content of security assessments. The security of individuals is based on a security threat assessment, as it provides the basis for determining the goals, tasks and bearers of protection.

As part of the preparation for making a security plan[10], it is necessary to obtain (from those responsible in the agency) a sketch of the facility/facilities, with planned places or space for a certain category of persons, as well as where the other, possibly opposing audience, group of people, etc. will be located. Such information is necessary for adequate consideration in the security plan and the deployment of an appropriate number of security personnel, and later for defining the deployment model, possible shifts of personnel due to the long duration of the event, withdrawal in case of need, joint action, closure of the space, possible complete or partial evacuation, etc.

Within the framework of preparatory activities and agreements with the client/event organizer, it is necessary to define the rules for event entry or attendance. It can be an open event, where anyone can attend, attendance may be allowed with a ticket purchased from points of sale, with a pass, badge, card, ID card, uniform, insignia, etc. This method of implementation implies delegated engagement of security personnel or other persons, while the security personnel will only provide support or protection. In the event of a situation where a person does not have an appropriate "document" for entry, has lost it, has not brought it with them, or arrives ad hoc, the security personnel should know how to proceed. The presence of authorized officials from the Ministry of Interior or the organizers is also agreed upon, and clear boundaries are set for taking measures in each situation, emphasizing who is responsible, who helps, assists, who takes legal measures, who closes the space, etc. The existence of multiple entrances only complicates the overall situation and allows for an increased risk of unwanted situations occurring.

The information received, which is complete and contains information about the space, the facility, attendance, the agenda, the attendance criteria, other services authorized to attend, the supply of food, etc., as well as information related to security, fire and counter-sabotage protection, forms the basis for preparing a security plan. In addition to having operational value for the security agency and serving to properly direct the persons who are directly involved in providing security, the plan is given to the organizer so that they can be kept informed about the overall engagement of the agency. It is also mandatory to submit the plan to the regional unit of the Ministry of Interior when the event is reported.

[9]Ibid, p. 147

[10]Pavlovic, N., Question Models and Assessment of the Security Situation in Security Functions and the Protection of Certain Persons, specialist thesis, Criminal Police Academy, Belgrade, 2013, p. 10.

Conclusions

Regarding sports events, based on research data, we can conclude that:

– Criminal offenses that occur at sports competitions are on the rise;

– Fans are predominantly young male individuals with secondary education living in urban areas;

–Although the security situation is generally good, with a tendency to deteriorate, and fans and the police share the same opinion, the presence of security personnel and police forces at sports competitions is mandatory;

– When using means of coercion, the police mostly use rubber batons, while security personnel use physical force;

– The violent behavior of fan groups at sports competitions results in a repressive attitude by the police and greater readiness of security agencies;

–Mutual cooperation between the Macedonian police and foreign security services during international sports competitions between domestic and foreign clubs yields positive results, and the transfer of information to private security agencies is necessary, but currently insufficient, and essential for the preparation of quality and efficient security plans and their implementation;

– There are still shortcomings in security, as at public events and sports competitions the methods of action of destructive individuals and groups are constantly changing and improving (for example, pyrotechnic devices are still being brought in by fans, sometimes in cooperation with the managements of sports clubs);

– The work of private security agencies should move towards increased training of personnel, practicing various situations at secured events, and the procurement of sufficient and modern material and technical means and equipment;

–There is a need for the formation of a special sector and departments in the Ministry of Interior, where specially trained units would deal with such situations in cooperation with private security agencies. In addition to practicing immediate action in the event of disturbances of public peace and order at public events or sports competitions, it is necessary to apply a proactive approach and collect operational information on all aspects of the event. This includes identifying the indirect goals of the event, the actors involved, the means by which they will act, the effect they seek to achieve, as well as the behind-the-scenes organizers of disturbances, instigators or supporters. The application of criminal intelligence and the analysis of the information obtained are necessary in order to obtain accurate, timely, usable and useful information and to avoid actions based on precisely dosed, calculated disinformation, which could further complicate the entire process of planning and implementing security at gatherings, public events, and sports competitions.

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HYBRID THREATS AND DIGITAL DECEPTION: RETHINKING POLICE STRATEGIES AGAINST DISINFORMATION

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian-Ukrainian conflict have accelerated the evolution of disinformation into a strategic instrument of hybrid warfare, fundamentally challenging states and security institutions to safeguard informational integrity. This study examines disinformation as a transnational security threat that blurs boundaries between information operations, organised crime, and political manipulation. Employing qualitative methodology and systematic analysis of European institutional sources, the research investigates Russia's exploitation of the infodemic as a tool of non-conventional influence designed to undermine European stability and democratic resilience.

Emphasis is given to EUROPOL's coordinating role in developing multilateral policing responses, with specific attention to Portuguese liaison officers' contributions to intelligence sharing and disruption of disinformation networks. The study argues that law enforcement must fundamentally adapt strategic frameworks to address informational dimensions of hybrid threats and strengthen transnational cooperation.

Four principal findings emerge: disinformation functions as a component of Russia's hybrid warfare; EUROPOL provides critical coordination mechanisms; Portuguese liaison officers serve as essential mediators in transnational security architecture; and a regulatory gap exists in EUROPOL's mandate. Conclusions propose an eight-dimensional anti-infodemic capacity-building model centred on specialised procedures, ethical training, technological innovation, institutional partnerships, and public engagement.

Keywords - *Online disinformation; Infodemic; Hybrid threats; Digital policing; EUROPOL*

1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary security environments are characterised by unprecedented informational complexity and global vulnerability. The Covid-19 pandemic revealed deep structural and institutional fragilities while simultaneously amplifying societal distrust and polarisation – conditions that nourish hybrid threats. Coupled with rising geopolitical tensions – most visibly the Russian-Ukrainian war, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and Sino-American rivalry – these dynamics have reshaped the liberal international order and intensified global insecurity.

Disinformation, magnified by digital technologies and social media, now constitutes a systemic risk to social cohesion, institutional credibility, and democratic stability. The

infodemic – a proliferation of false, conspiratorial, and misleading narratives accelerated by artificial intelligence – has become a core vulnerability in contemporary security governance. Functioning both as an accelerant and as a weapon within hybrid warfare, disinformation erodes democratic resilience while consolidating autocratic power. This dynamic necessitates a redefinition of policing that transcends national boundaries, relies on multilateral cooperation, and integrates transnational coordination mechanisms.

Portugal's engagement in European Union (EU) security networks, particularly via the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (EUROPOL), epitomises this transnational approach. Liaison Officers from the Ministry of Home Affairs (OLMAI), drawn from the Public Security Police (PSP) and the National Republican Guard (GNR), perform strategic roles in The Hague, coordinating between national and international authorities and shaping cross-border security policy.

This study examines how pan-European policing mechanisms safeguard informational and democratic integrity through EUROPOL's coordination architecture, the promotion of reliable information, and the enhancement of critical thinking in confronting disinformation threats.

2. METHODS

This investigation employed a qualitative, exploratory, and descriptive design, examining European policing strategies to counter disinformation. The research integrates three complementary methodological dimensions:

a. *Documentary and normative analysis.* Official documents issued between 2015 and 2024 by the European Commission, EUROPOL, the European External Action Service (EEAS), the European Parliament, and the United Nations were systematically examined. This corpus included regulations, strategic communications, and codes of conduct relating to disinformation and transnational police cooperation.

b. *Systematic literature review.* A critical review of approximately 100 peer-reviewed and institutional sources was conducted, covering digital geopolitics, cybersecurity, infodemiology, and police sciences. This review identified principal theoretical and operational frameworks concerning information manipulation and institutional responses.

c. *Applied case study – EUROPOL and Portugal.* The empirical component analysed EUROPOL's strategic and operational outputs – specifically SIENA, EIS, and EPE platforms, alongside SOCTA, IOCTA, and TE-SAT reports. Complementary national materials concerning Portuguese Liaison Officers' contributions were examined to elucidate their roles in intelligence sharing and network disruption.

In methodological terms, the study is bounded by its reliance on documentary and institutional sources, which inevitably reflect the strategic priorities, framings, and blind spots of European and international organisations. Rather than constituting a representative empirical sample of disinformation campaigns, the corpus provides a normative and programmatic portrait of how hybrid threats are problematised within the EU's security field. This epistemic positioning cautions against generalising beyond the European context and underscores the need to triangulate future research with primary data, such as interviews with liaison officers, operational case files, or digital trace data from specific disinformation incidents.

The triangulation of documentary evidence, scholarly literature, and institutional data provided a holistic analytical framework. Owing to the sensitive nature of material, the

research privileged theoretical and institutional validation over quantitative data collection. Future research could therefore adopt mixed-method designs.

From an analytical perspective, the focus on EU institutions, EUROPOL, and Portuguese liaison officers, while justified by the research objectives, also introduces a Eurocentric institutional bias. Disinformation ecosystems are shaped not only by state actors such as the Russian Federation but also by domestic political entrepreneurs, transnational networks of activists, commercial platforms, and algorithmic architectures that transcend formal jurisdictional boundaries. A more systematic engagement with platform governance and the political economy of attention would therefore complement the current state-centric emphasis and refine the understanding of how hybrid threats materialise in everyday digital practices.

3. THE MODERN REBIRTH OF THE "SCIENTIFIC POLICEMAN"

The digital era represents the culmination of technological progress and democratised information access. Since Alan Turing's foundational inquiry into machine intelligence, the digital sphere has become an essential operational domain for both society and law enforcement.

A critical distinction exists between digitisation – the conversion of analogue data – and digitalization – strategic integration of digital systems and artificial intelligence to enhance operational processes. This technological transformation has fundamentally redefined security conceptualisation and management. The resulting network society concentrates power within digital flows; yet this transformation simultaneously exposes vulnerabilities: unregulated spaces facilitating cybercrime, disinformation, and hybrid warfare.

Historically, policing evolved from empiricism into a scientific profession rooted in criminology and sociology. Pioneering figures – Hans Gross, Edmond Locard, August Vollmer – established the concept of the "scientific policeman." Technological innovations, from the Berlin police radio to INTERPOL's international network to computerised systems in the 1970s, marked decisive stages in modern policing. In Portugal, the PSP mirrored this evolution through early communication systems such as the 115-alert line, integrated into the European 112 networks.

The evolution towards a "cognitive battlefield" can be read through the lenses of securitisation theory and risk society. By framing disinformation as an existential threat to democratic stability, European actors construct a security narrative that both legitimises extraordinary measures and reconfigures the boundaries between internal and external security. At the same time, the pervasive uncertainty characteristic of late modernity, as articulated in risk society approaches, helps explain why publics are particularly vulnerable to conspiratorial narratives and why police institutions themselves operate under conditions of epistemic fragility.

Contemporary policing fully operates within the digital paradigm, leveraging big data, generative AI, and predictive analytics. European law enforcement agencies have evolved to employ technology as a strategic enabler whilst maintaining human-centred, community-based approaches. The European Commission's White Paper on AI and subsequent Regulation frame these developments around excellence, trust, and democratic oversight. Policing remains fundamentally a human activity; technological innovation must coexist with ethics, community proximity, and continuous professional development. As

Bayley and Shearing (1996) observe, technology augments but cannot replace human judgement – the foundation of effective and democratic policing.

4. UNDERSTANDING THE INFODEMIC

The modern information society is characterised by pervasive digital technologies across communication, governance, and security. Threats transcend borders; cyberspace has become a key arena for both crime and law enforcement response.

Among emerging hybrid threats, disinformation stands out as an instrument of cognitive warfare that undermines democratic trust and stability. The EU identified Russian disinformation in 2015 as a hybrid, global threat, responding through strategic communications initiatives, the Code of Practice on Disinformation, and institutional task forces.

The Covid-19 pandemic deepened digital dependence and exposed humanity to a dual crisis: a biological epidemic and an infodemic – an overabundance of information that obscures reliability. This "epidemic of information" spreads virally via social media, amplifying anxiety and distrust. Emotional contagion paralyses critical reasoning, transforming disinformation into a cognitive disease with long-term social consequences.

Conceptually, the article situates disinformation at the intersection of cognitive warfare, information operations, and public health metaphors of contagion, drawing on the emergent field of infodemiology. To avoid conceptual inflation, it is crucial to distinguish analytically between misinformation (unintentional inaccuracies), disinformation (deliberate deception), and malinformation (true information weaponised out of context), as suggested by recent scholarship. This tripartite distinction clarifies which phenomena legitimately fall within the remit of policing and which primarily demand regulatory, educational, or journalistic responses, thereby mitigating the risk of an over-securitised understanding of digital communication.

The science of infodemiology is essential to detecting and mitigating spread. Media institutions must prioritise verification and transparency, serving as guardians of informational integrity. Promoting digital literacy and fostering critical awareness are vital to immunising societies against falsehoods. As Rothkopf (2003) observes, *if disinformation is the disease, knowledge is the cure*.

In response, the revised Code of Practice on Disinformation, complemented by the Digital Services Act and the European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles, reinforces Europe's digital resilience. Platforms such as EUvsDisinfo, SOMA, EDMO, and the European Centre for Algorithmic Transparency enhance monitoring and coordination.

5. RUSSIAN DISINFORMATION AGAINST THE WEST

Warfare in the twenty-first century is increasingly defined by technological revolution and intensified geopolitical rivalry. Truth and rationality are being systematically undermined by digital conflict and infodemic phenomena that manipulate cognitive biases to distort perception.

Russia's kleptocratic regime has emerged as a principal architect of militarised disinformation, operationalising what analysts describe as "perpetual adversarial competition" through a sophisticated ecosystem of propaganda and psychological manipulation. These influence operations employ bots, trolls, and AI-driven amplification to destabilise elections, discredit Western leaders, and erode public trust. The cyber domain

has become a key battleground where authoritarian regimes wage invisible warfare over perception control.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine constitutes a profound challenge to the post-1945 international order. Moscow's neo-imperialist project is marked by an extensive propaganda front designed to justify aggression and undermine Western cohesion. This information warfare transcends physical conflict and extends into economic, cultural, and security domains. Moscow's hybrid strategy combines human operatives and AI-enabled systems within an architecture of "troll factories" and botnets designed to intensify polarisation and erode democratic legitimacy.

Typical Kremlin disinformation operations begin by infiltrating target media ecosystems, deploying tactics such as logical fallacies and predictive projection. The Global Engagement Centre identified four strategic aims: to discredit, divide, disarm, and demoralise adversaries. Digital obfuscation allows Russia to deny involvement whilst sustaining proxy cyberwars across multiple platforms.

While the Russian Federation provides a paradigmatic case of militarised disinformation, it does not exhaust the spectrum of actors engaged in cognitive operations. Domestic political entrepreneurs, commercial platforms, and transnational extremist networks also appropriate similar techniques, which underscores the need for analytical frameworks that move beyond a single-adversary focus.

6. POLICING DISINFORMATION: THE ROLE OF EUROPOL

Digital transformation has fundamentally reshaped law enforcement, compelling adaptation to new operational realities shaped by cybercrime, algorithmic manipulation, and informational warfare. Crimes such as phishing, ransomware, and deepfakes demand specialised technical capacity and cross-border collaboration.

Modern policing integrates smart surveillance, real-time analytics, and meta-information to enhance risk assessment. As social interactions migrate online, digital community engagement has become essential to countering disinformation and maintaining public trust. Combating the infodemic requires systematic monitoring of open sources and digital environments, supported by investment in technology and professional training. Given the complexity of deepfakes and AI-driven manipulation, effective responses depend on multi-stakeholder collaboration between police forces, cybersecurity experts, governments, and civil society organisations.

This paradigm – known as smart policing – integrates AI, machine learning, and big data into an evidence-based, intelligence-led framework. Following Vollmer's concept of the "scientific policeman," technology functions as an instrument of enhancement rather than substitution for human judgement.

At the centre of Europe's security ecosystem stands EUROPOL, coordinating intelligence exchange and operational support across Member States. Through its specialised centres – Operations and Analysis, European Serious and Organised Crime, European Cybercrime, European Counter Terrorism, and European Financial and Economic Crime – EUROPOL provides strategic and technical support. Its flagship intelligence products – SOCTA, IOCTA, and TE-SAT – deliver predictive insights into transnational crime and hybrid threats, aligning with the EU Strategic Agenda and strengthening European resilience.

Central to this architecture are Liaison Officers, who facilitate real-time coordination among Member States via secure systems (SIENA, EIS, EPE), connecting over

22,000 professionals across multiple policing domains. Portugal's OLMAI exemplifies this cooperative approach, participating in the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) and joint operations with European and international partners.

Nonetheless, a significant limitation persists: EUROPOL's current mandate does not explicitly include disinformation or infodemic-related phenomena, restricting cohesive EU-wide responses. Expanding this mandate would consolidate coordination and align intelligence capacities to address hybrid and cognitive threats. While the argument for extending EUROPOL's mandate to encompass disinformation-related phenomena is compelling from an operational coordination perspective, it must be balanced against fundamental rights considerations and the principle of subsidiarity. Any such reform would require clear legal definitions, robust oversight mechanisms, and procedural safeguards to prevent mission creep into the policing of legitimate political speech or journalistic activity. Embedding digital ethics and human rights impact assessments within EUROPOL's innovation and analytical functions would therefore be indispensable to maintaining democratic legitimacy.

In this context, policing should be conceptualised less as a standalone coercive function and more as a component of a multi-layered governance ecosystem that includes regulators, civil society, academia, and private platforms. Law enforcement agencies can contribute unique investigative, intelligence, and coordination capacities, but sustainable resilience against disinformation ultimately depends on societal capabilities for critical scrutiny, media literacy, and institutional trust. The role of police organisations, particularly within EUROPOL's networked architecture, is therefore to act as facilitators of collective infovigilance rather than as primary arbiters of truth.

7. FINDINGS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

European policing has been transformed by digital integration over recent decades. The transnationalisation of crime – from terrorism to organised crime to hybrid warfare – has exposed the limits of traditional cooperation models, demanding data-driven, interoperable policing.

In this cognitive battlefield, truth itself is contested. Following the crises of 2016 and the pandemic, European law enforcement has entered a stage of structural renewal, employing AI-driven intelligence and predictive analytics whilst navigating complex dilemmas concerning rights, accountability, and proportionality.

With more than 80% of Europeans perceiving disinformation as a democratic threat, the EU has established cross-sector expert networks to enhance resilience. The legitimacy of digital policing depends fundamentally on rights-based governance and public ethics.

EUROPOL embodies Europe's science-based and cooperative policing model. Its secure systems ensure information exchange among Member States, whilst its intelligence products offer predictive insights into transnational and hybrid threats. The EUROPOL Innovation Lab identifies risks of AI manipulation and deepfakes, advocating their formal inclusion within the Agency's mandate.

Some Member States have criminalised deliberate disinformation, though ethical tensions between freedom and censorship persist. In Portugal, the absence of a legal typology for malicious disinformation weakens institutional capacity to counter manipulative narratives. This gap underscores the need for a shared international framework that defines

typologies and strengthens non-criminal mechanisms – literacy, self-regulation, and fact-checking. Freedom of expression must be preserved; its abuse cannot legitimise deception.
To enhance resilience, this study proposes an eight-dimensional model for police anti-infodemic strategy:

1. Specialised procedures and technical capacity
2. Continuous ethics and digital literacy training
3. Technological modernisation and early warning systems
4. Partnerships with fact-checking and monitoring organisations
5. Enhanced cooperation via CEPOL, EUROPOL, FRONTEX, and INTERPOL
6. Psychological support for officers engaged in disinformation work
7. Advanced communication and crisis management capabilities
8. Public awareness and responsible digital citizenship campaigns

The proposed eight-dimensional anti-infodemic policing model should be understood as a conceptual framework rather than a fully operational doctrine. Its originality lies in integrating technological capability, ethical literacy, psychological support, and civic engagement into a single architecture of informational resilience, with EUROPOL and national liaison networks functioning as key mediating nodes. Future empirical work could evaluate this model through comparative case studies, assessing how different Member States implement each dimension and which combinations yield measurable improvements in the detection, disruption, and deterrence of disinformation campaigns. This model would reinforce Portugal's integration within EUROPOL's strategic framework whilst enhancing informational resilience across the European security landscape.

8. CONCLUSION

This study identifies the rise of a hybrid, multichannel infodemic ecosystem, driven by state and non-state actors exploiting Europe's technological and cognitive vulnerabilities. Four central insights emerge: first, disinformation operates as a component of Russia's hybrid warfare, strategically designed to erode democratic trust; second, EUROPOL plays a crucial role in the European security framework, integrating secure networks and early-warning systems; third, Portuguese OLMAI serve as essential mediators between national and European authorities, strengthening intelligence coordination; fourth, a regulatory gap persists, as EUROPOL's current mandate excludes disinformation-related phenomena.

The research stresses the need to embed digital ethics and informational literacy within police training frameworks. Combating disinformation demands not only technological capability but also human discernment and communication competence. Accordingly, the study proposes an anti-infodemic capacity-building model based on eight strategic pillars: infovigilance, ethics, technological innovation, institutional partnerships, international cooperation, officer wellbeing, communication, and civic engagement.

Scientifically, this work contributes in three ways: first, it integrates infodemiology into the concept of scientific policing, linking informational integrity to democratic legitimacy; second, it reframes EUROPOL's role as part of a pan-European security architecture that embodies the Union's soft power; third, it advances understanding of twenty-first-century security, where police cooperation defends not only borders but also cognitive and informational frontiers.

Safeguarding informational integrity has become both a democratic and strategic imperative. Law enforcement must act as a custodian of epistemic trust through transparency, cooperation, and human-centred ethics. The defence of democracy in the

twenty-first century will depend less on the control of data than on the preservation of knowledge integrity itself. *Ad summa nitamur*

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COMMUNITY POLICING – START EXPERIENCE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

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Abstract

Community policing, as a model of police organization and operational practice, emerged from a critical assessment of traditional policing approaches. Its goal is to create a modern, responsive police institution that meets the needs of democratic societies and aligns with international and European standards (Skolnick & Bayley, 1988; European Commission, 2020). The concept emphasizes preventive and problem-solving approaches, partnerships with local communities, respect for human and minority rights, civil liberties, equality, and multicultural coexistence (Cordner, 2021; Lum & Koper, 2020).

In the Republic of Serbia, community policing has been adopted as a global model for police organization and operations, reflecting the principle that the police serve society, protect its members, and promote ethical and cultural values. The strategic vision of the Ministry of Interior of Serbia is to develop a modern, professional, and accountable police service capable of responding effectively to contemporary societal challenges while maintaining alignment with European and international standards. This paper examines the conceptual foundations and organizational implications of community policing as a framework for modern democratic policing.

Keywords: *community policing, police, organization, European Union, Ministry of Interior.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Community policing, as a new model of police organization, began to be applied in the United States of America in the early 1980s and later developed in Western European countries (Great Britain, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, France, Germany), some Asian countries (Hong Kong, Japan), as well as Canada and Australia. Since 2000, community policing has also been implemented in post-communist countries of Eastern Europe that are in atransition period.

This approach is based on respect for human rights, responsibility, and the need to carry out effective police operations in partnership with communities for which police perform public service. This philosophy focuses on the community – the public – and its

needs, as well as on the fact that the police serve the community in a responsible mannerand through respect for human rights.

At the beginning of the new millennium, the Republic of Serbia embarked on the path of transition and long-awaited social reforms, emphasizing the necessity of democratization, the construction of a modern state, and the rule of law (Nikač, 2019).The reform of the police *de facto* began with the separation of the former State Security Service from the *RS MOI* and the establishment of the Security Information Agency (BIA) as a specialized agency (secret service) for the protection of the constitutional order. The remaining (mostly) part of the *RS MOI* – the former Public Security Service and the accompanying logistics service – was programmatically shaped through an official document entitled *Vision for the Reform of RS MOI,* according to which the most important objectives of the transformation of the police are depolitization, decriminalization, professionalization, modern (pro-European) organization, and the rule of law, among others.(Vision and Policy Mission,2002).

De iure, the reform of the *RS MOI*was articulated through the Law on Police of the RS, which highlighted the concept of the organization of the civil province, at the center of which is the Police Directorate. Within the structure of the Police Directorate, according to the hierarchical principle, there are functional lines of work (administration) and territorial organizational units (PD Belgrade, RPD, PS).(Law on Police,2018). The new organizationalmodel of the *RS MOI* ("citizen service") also implied a new way of police work;therefore, based on a critical analysis of the previous traditional (repressive) system, the concept of police work in the communitywas adopted as a pilot project.

2. THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY POLICING

In modern doctrine and practice, the concept of *community policing* is not uniquely and uniformly defined; rather, depending on the author and the field of study, there are several different definitions, with many similar but also differing elements.

According to Skolnick and Bayley (1988), community policing, in the performance of its tasks, is based on the following principles: (a) planned, developed, and two-way active relations between the police and citizens, with due respect for local problems and community needs; (b) territorial decentralization of the police, including police stations, substations, and other forms of localized presence; (c) reorientation of patrol activities toward preventive and problem-solving functions; and (d) the introduction and increased involvement of civilian personnel in police work (Skolnick & Bayley, 1988).*Recent comparative research highlights the multidimensional and context-specific nature of community policing and its evolving practices in European environments (Bayerl et al., 2017; de Maillard & Terpstra, 2021).*

According to a second group of authors led by Willard, who worked within the *Community Policing Consortium project*, the concept of community police includes community partnership and problem solving. The first component highlights the development of police relations with the community, involvement in crime prevention, and the pooling of resources in accordance with community needs. The second component includes the identification of community problems and ways of solving them (Zekavica,2005, p.83-89).

We are of the opinion that the definition of community policing given by the American theorists Trojanovicz and Bucqueroux can be accepted, according to which it is a concept that expresses a new philosophy of police work, based on the idea that the police and citizens work together and use different creative ways to solve problems at the level of

the local community related to crime, fear of crime, and other social disorders(Trojanovicz&Bucqueroux,1990).

3. ELEMENTS OFCOMMUNITY POLICING

The elements of the concept of *community policing* are numerous and generally identical in most organizational forms and models; however, their importance is particularly emphasized through partnership with the community and problem-oriented police work.

Partnership is a category based on the equality of the community, the police, and other entities that participate in the process of resolving security and related problems in society. On this basis, cooperation is further developed through communication, identification, and resolution of the problems of the participants in the process, namely the police, institutions, local governments, organizations, the business community, and citizens. The police and theirpartners must work together because security and crime problems in the community significantly affect the quality of life of citizens and are never completely under the control of the police and other community bodies. For these reasons, the joint work of the police and other actors is necessary to solve problems that the police organization alone cannot solve. In this sense, the police and the community pool resources and work to find solutions to eliminate, mitigate and prevent the consequences of actions, conflicts and potential problems (Simić,2009).

The principles on which partnerships between the police and the community are developed are as follows: equality (reciprocal respect, freedom of decision-making, creativity, equality in joint work, and valuation of contributions, etc.); trust (fulfillment of commitments made by the police and meeting the expectations to the public and partners); problem solving (in a persistent and consistent manner); and joint responsibility (shared responsibility of the police and the community for cooperation, planned activities,and implemented measures in the realization of security)(Simonović, 2006).

Problem-oriented police work involves interactive and joint action by the police and society in identifying and resolving problems. According to Goldstein, this approach is based on the study of specific community problems, including the analysis of local security issues (e.g., extortion, prostitution, juvenile delinquency), citizens' expectations, and appropriate means of response(Goldstein, 1979). In recent years, research on evidence-based policing has further reinforced the importance of combining these community-oriented approaches with data-driven decision-making and problem-solving strategies (Koper et al., 2025), demonstrating the evolution of problem-oriented policing in contemporary practice.

Problem-oriented police work include the following elements: a standard operational model of work (as opposed to ad hoc responsesto individual cases); the involvement of police officersfrom all areas of work (not only specialists and managers); cooperation between the police and other entities (agencies, services); the influence, participation, and responsibility of the community; and problem solving. Community-oriented police activity is not a static program but is a guiding philosophy that seeks to meet the needs of the community through a high level of professionalism and continuous development.

4. BASIC PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY POLICING

Based on the outlined concept and elements of communitypolicing, both doctrine and practice largely define and determinethe basic principles on which the concept, organization and work of community policing are founded. In our opinion, the basic principles of community policing can be conditionally grouped according to: social environmental factors (changes, reforms), the police and its role (leadership, mission, powers, responsibility), functions (vision, services, problem solving), and mutual relationships (partnership, cooperation, equality, trust) etc. We will briefly consider the most important basic principles of community policing related to the objective and subjective circumstances on the one hand, and personal and functional elements on the other.

According to the concepts of a large number of authors and police experts, the most important basic principles of community policing include:

- Change –creating new partnerships with the community and changes within the police that increase opportunity for all participants to contribute to building community capacity and jointly solving community problems;
- Leadership – implying continuous emphasis on and strengthening of the vision, values, and mission of the police within the local community, at all organizationallevels. Every police officer must demonstrate initiative, within their capabilities and competencies, to influence others and promote the philosophy of communitypolicing;
- Vision –representing the image of the ideal, i.e., the way in which public safety and quality of life are to be enhanced through community policing;
- Partnership –the development of partnership among all community groups as a means of promoting cooperation and consensus. Cooperation represents both a philosophy and a strategy through which the police develop community capacity and solve problems;
- Problem solving – an analytical process and strategic approach aimed at identifying and accurately recognizing phenomena and events in the community and their causes, in order to design appropriate solutions and strategies;
- Equality – implies that the police provide services to all citizens regardless of race, gender, nationality, religious affiliation, material status, sexual orientation, or other differences;
- Trust–representing the belief that the police genuinely act in accordance with what they communicate to the public;
- Empowerment – implying greater freedom in decision-making for police officers and citizens;
- Service – reflecting the commitment of community policing to provide decentralized and personalized serviceof an intensity and type determined by communityneeds;
- Responsibility –referring to the shared responsibility of the police and the community for security outcomes.

5. COMMUNITY POLICING IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

The social basis for the development of the concept of community policing in the Republic of Serbia lies in the fact that, at the end of the last century,significant social changes occured, after which public institutions entered a reform process and began participating in the construction of democratic values with the support of civil society. Among these institutions is the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia and the police as the institution most directly responsible for law enforcement and security protection. The issue of security should be interpreted broadly, in the sense that, in addition to the police, interested and responsible citizens, other authorities, and community entities are involved, because security also encompasses a subjective sense of safety and a general consensus within the community.

In the context of the social environment, the police in the Republic of Serbia took into account the legacy of the past, previous relations and communication with citizens, the need for the development of democratic governance, requirements for organizational reform, orientation towards citizens' needs, and the enhancement of security in order to reduce fear of crime. On this basis, it was envisaged that the *RS MOI* and the police would be transformed into a modern police service capable of adapting its organization and activities to citizens'needs. (Vision and Mission, 2002).

The normative and legal basis for the development of community policing in the Republic of Serbia was established with the adoption of the Law on Police at the end of 2005, grounded in domestic police-legal practice, traditions, experience, and international standards (Law on Police,2005). Following the adoption of the Law on the Security Information Agency and the separation of the State Security Service from the former *RS MOI*, the most significant novelties of the Law on Police related to the concept and systematization of public security activities into classical police functions.

The most important innovations introduced by the Law on Police concern the organization, powers, and control of police work. In a systemic and legal sense, the police formally acquired the status of a public service operating in the service of citizens, in accordance with reform-oriented commitments and regional and international documents stating that "the police force represents a public service created by law, which must be responsible for maintaining and enforcing the law" (Resolution, 1979). This broader framework is further reflected in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the European Code of Police Ethics, and other instruments relevant to the democratic development of policing.

According to the Law on Police, the basic duty of the police is to ensure the safety of all persons within the territory of the Republic of Serbia. This includes providing protection of rights and freedoms, eliminating danger, performing rescue functions, assuming responsibility for failures, informing the public both directly and indirectly, cooperating with citizens and organized groups in the interest of public safety, and continuously protecting human lifeand security. Accordingly, the objective of police worj is the equal protection of security, rights, and freedoms, the application of the law, and the strengthening of the rule of law, in compliance with national and international standards of police conduct.

Police powers are regulated in a manner that emphasizes the protection of the rights of persons subjected to police action, openness towards the public, humanity, proportionality, and effective legal protection. This legal framework enables a gradual shift

in police worj from reactive to increasingly proactive approaches, from post-delict to pre-delict action, and from the suppression of security threats towards their prevention.

The Law on Police specifically provides for cooperation with bodies of territorial autonomy, local self-government, public institutions, non-governmental and other organizations, minority and organized groups, and self-organized citizens, with the aim of ensuring the safety of people and property and developing partnerships in the prevention and detection of criminal offences and their perpetrators(Law on Police,2018).

5.1. Past Development and Gained Experience

The introduction and development of the community policing model in the Republic of Serbia have been conditioned and enabled by contemporary social changes and trends aimed at strengthening the institutions of a democratic society in Serbia during the late past and the beginning of this century. In this context, since 2001*RS MOI*has been carrying out preparations for the introduction of the community policing model and has undertaken a number of measures in the reform of preventive police work, the strengthening of legality in police operations, the protection of human and minority rights of citizens, the improvement of communication with the public, and the enhancement of cooperation with citizens and the community. These efforts have created prerequisites for more effective prevention and the development of partnership relations with citizens.The past development of community policing in Serbia included pilot projects and cooperation with international organizations such as the OSCE, DFID, the Norwegian Police Directorate, and local NGOs. Key activities encompassed community surveys, expert consultations, professional training, door-to-door outreach programs, cooperation with the media, advisory bodies, and preventive campaigns (Bošković & Simić, 2004; Nikač, 2019).

With a view to the strategic reform of the police, from 2002 to 2003*the RS MOI*, in cooperation with the OSCE Mission in the Republic of Serbia, the Danish Center for Human Rights, and recognised international and domestic experts in the field of justice and policing, prepared the official document *Vision for the Reform of RS MOI*, which includes the vision, values, mission, and key areas of work. Recent evaluations of community policing in Serbia highlight the importance of citizen feedback, local adaptation of programs, and continuous monitoring in order to improve effectiveness and trust (Novaković & Ilić, 2020).Studies from other national contexts also emphasize organizational challenges, such as police officer burnout and resource constraints, which affect the sustainability of community policing initiatives (Okoka & Kheswa, 2025). The document defined the purpose of community policing, its objectives, strategic directions of development, tasks, success criteria, and indicators related to communication and trust between the police and the community, education of police officers and community representatives, citizen involvement, partnership between the police and the community, and problem-oriented police work in solving security issues.Particular importance in the planning and implementation of the new concept of police organization and work was also attributed to rich international experience, especially that of developed countries with a strong democratic tradition(Nikač,2019).

The development of the concept of community policing in Serbia took place in phases, initially covering pilot areas and subsequently expanding to the entire territory of the Republic. Activities carried out in the pilot areas resulted in examples of good practice, which were documented in an evaluation report conducted in December 2004 by representatives of the *RS MOI*, the Department of International Development of the British Government (DFID), and the Police Academy in Belgrade. Based on the experience gained

and identified good practices, further activities were undertaken and continue to be implemented throughout the Republic. To date, the development of community policing in the Republic of Serbia has been accompanied by successful international cooperation with the OSCE Mission in Serbia, the Department of International Development of the British Government (DFID), the National Police Director of the Kingdom of Norway, the Swiss Agency for Development andCooperation, and other international partners.

Among the more significantactivities is the research project entitled "Police Observation in Serbia", jointly organized by the *RS MOI*, the OSCE Mission in the Republic of Serbia, and the agency "Partner," with the aim of gaining insight into citizens' attitudes, opinions, and expectations regarding security issues, the police as an institution, and its role in the community. The OSCE Mission in the Republic of Serbia also conducted a survey of police officers' opinions concerning the implementation of community policing.

Numerousexpert meetings – courses, seminars, workshops, round tables, and conferences – have been organized in various areas, including modern standards of police work, human rights, strategic management, analysis, and problem-oriented policing. Their aim has been to raise awareness among police officers about contemporary policing practices and the necessity of community participation in improving security.

Education is ongoingthrough mandatory annual professional training programs for police officers, within which topics related to the theoretical and practical aspects of community policing are addressed. Education of citizens and other community stakeholders on security-related phenomena is conducted through participation in public forums and lectures addressing current issues such as student safety in schools, domestic violence, juvenile delinquency, drug addiction, traffic safety,etc.

Among other activities, it should benoted that consultative meetings are held in local communities at various levels (municipal communities, neighborhoods, streets, residential buildings, and associations) with the aim of improving communication with citizens. "Door-to-door" activities are also carried out, through which police officers communicate directly with citizens regarding their personal safety and security protection. Cooperation with the media has been enhanced through various forms of communication, such as round tables with media representatives, media support through the promotion of community police activities, participation in TV and radio programs, and the creation of audio and video materials for journalists.

The public and citizens are informed (through brochures, flyers, information leaflets, posters, etc.) about their rights and obligations, ways of establishing and improving contact between citizens and the police, procedures for filing complaints regarding police work, traffic safety, protection of property, and other security-related issues(Nikač, 2019). Advisory bodies have been established at the level of local communities in order to involve various stakeholders in addressing security problems. These include safety councils and committees for traffic safety, disease prevention, prevention of juvenile delinquency, safety of children in schools, anti-corruption teams, and similar bodies. In addition to identifying key security problems within the community, these bodies have implemented numerous projects, programs, and actions aimed at improving overall security, with particular emphasis on preventive activities. Furthermore, the work of citizen advisory groups operating at thelocal community level – whose primary function is to facilitate communication between citizens, the police, and other community actors – has been initiated.

Among other regular activities , particular attention should be given to the project aimed at further developing the methodology of problem-oriented policing, implemented in

cooperation with the National Police Directorate of the Kingdom of Norway. This project encompassed several stages in addressing security problems: problem identification, problem analysis,implementation of measures targeting individuals, situation, and the local community, as well as evaluation of results and processes. Improved cooperation with non-governmental organizations has also been achieved, particularly with organizations addressing domestic violence, along with participation in preventive campaigns, educational activities and the development of partnerships with other relevant actors.

Among the significant initiatives is the "School Police Officer" project, under which, based on security assessments, police officers are deployed in schools with pronounced security challenges. Police officers act preventively in cooperation with schools and other community stakeholders, with a focus on continuous education of police officers, teaching staff, parents, and students on various aspects of student and school safety. In order to enable the police in the Republic of Serbia to operate responsibly and in partnership with the community and citizens, the Community Policing Strategy in the Republic of Serbia was developed as an appropriate framework for police action in the community, adapted to the security and other needs of citizens in Serbia (Bošković & Simić, 2004).

The Strategy is aligned with the National Program for the Integration of the Republic of Serbia into the European Union and provides guidance for establishing and developing new forms of cooperation between the police, citizens, communities, and institutions, with the aim of enhancing personal and collective security in the Republic of Serbia. In this regard, the Strategy represents a continuation of the *MOI*Development Strategy, supports relevant guidelines from the National Security Strategy, and complements other strategies addressing serious security challenges, risks, and threats.

CONCLUSION

Contemporary security challenges of the 21st century have exposed the limitations of the traditional, centralized, and predominantly repressive model of policing, which has proven insufficient both in crime prevention and in building trust between the police and the community. In response to these challenges, the concept of community policing has emerged as the dominant philosophy of modern and democratic police work, based on partnership, prevention, and respect for human rights(Cordner, 2021; Lum & Koper, 2020).

The analysis presented in this paper confirms that community policing represents the most appropriate organizational and value-based framework for police functioning in contemporary democratic societies. This concept does not merely entail changes in operational policing methods, but requires a fundamental transformation of police culture, the role of police officers, and the relationship between the police and citizens as recipients of public services. Particular importance is placed on preventive action, decentralization of certain police functions, and continuous cooperation with the local community.

In the Republic of Serbia, community policing has been adopted as a modern model of police organization and practice, consistent with international standards and European values. The starting point of this concept is the understanding of the police as a public service whose primary role is the protection of societal interests, the rule of law, human and minority rights, civil liberties, equality, and multicultural coexistence. The continued development of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Serbia as a modern, professional, and accountable institution represents a key prerequisite for the effective implementation of this model in practice.

Although the subject of this paper is predominantly conceptual and organizational in nature, several *de lege ferenda* recommendations may be identified based on the presented findings. In this regard, it is necessary to further improve the normative framework through the simplification of police-legal procedures and the harmonization of police legislation and by-laws with the legal acquis of the European Union. Additionally, the continuous strengthening of professional capacities of police officers, enhancement of mechanisms for cooperation with the local community, and development of effective instruments of police transparency and accountability remain essential(Skogan & Hartnett, 2021; Weisburd et al., 2019).**These findings provide clear guidance for future legislative, organizational, and policy reforms of policing in the Republic of Serbia, particularly in the context of strengthening community policing in accordance with European and international standards.**

In conclusion, community policing should be understood not only as an organizational model, but also as a normative and value-based framework that enables more effective, legitimate, and socially responsible police work. Its consistent implementation contributes to strengthening public security, the rule of law, and citizens' trust in the police, which represents one of the fundamental objectives of contemporary policing systems.

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METHODOLOGICAL SPECIFICS OF RESEARCH ON COMPLEX POLICE PHENOMENA: FROM ORGANISED CRIME TO POLICE INTEGRITY

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Abstract

The paper analyses the specific features of the scientific research process in the study of complex police phenomena, including new forms of serious and organised crime, different models of policing, the role and importance of forensic science in police work, the mental health of police officers, as well as phenomena related to police deviance and integrity issues. Starting from the classic model of the research process – from problem formulation and theoretical framework development, through research design and data collection, to data analysis and reporting – the paper emphasises the specific challenges and methodological adjustments required at each stage when researching these phenomena. A combined methodological approach was employed, involving a review of relevant literature and a questionnaire administered to experts from both police practice and academia. The results confirm that each of the analysed phenomena entails distinct methodological challenges throughout the research phases. For example, defining the research problem and selecting an appropriate sample are particularly complex in the study of organised crime and police corruption. Data collection is especially challenging when dealing with hidden or stigmatised populations, while data processing and interpretation require multidisciplinary knowledge (e.g., forensic and psychological expertise) and a thorough understanding of the broader context. Recognising these specific methodological challenges contribute to the improvement of police research methodology and enhances understanding of the role and importance of security practice and science.

Keywords: methodology, scientific research, organised crime, models of policing, forensic science, mental health of police officers, police brutality and corruption

INTRODUCTION

Scientific research in the field of police and criminological phenomena must take into account the complexity and sensitivity of the phenomena under study (Milašinović &

Milojević, 2016). Every research process, according to the classical approach (Kothari, 2004), proceeds through a series of phases – from problem identification, through data collection and analysis, to interpretation and reporting. However, the specific characteristics of the researched phenomenon itself can significantly influence how these phases are conducted. In the domain of police studies, phenomena such as organised crime, policing strategies, forensic practice, the mental health of police officers, and police deviance (including brutality and corruption) represent particularly "difficult" research problems due to their complexity, dynamic nature, and often hidden character. Numerous authors emphasise that studying such phenomena requires the adaptation of standard methodological procedures and the combination of multiple research approaches (qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods) to obtain a comprehensive and reliable understanding (Ivković, 2005; Punch, 2009; Milojević, Milašinović, & Gligorijević, 2025).

The theoretical framework of this paper is grounded in contemporary knowledge from social science methodology and police science. The basic assumption is that each of the analysed phenomena imposes specific methodological challenges at every stage of the research process. For example, in researching new forms of serious and organised crime, theories of organised crime emphasise the transnational nature and secrecy of criminal networks, which complicates the formulation of research problems and hypotheses, as definitions are fluid and the boundaries of the phenomenon are often unclear (Natarajan, 2019). Previous research indicates that data collection on organised crime is particularly problematic due to the covert nature of such activities; researchers frequently rely on secondary sources – such as police reports, media accounts, or testimonies of protected witnesses –which may vary in reliability and validity (Abadinsky, 1981).

Similarly, the study of policing models – whether traditional policing, community policing, problem-oriented policing, intelligence-led policing, or predictive policing – faces significant terminological and theoretical ambiguities. The literature suggests that there is no single, universally accepted classification of policing models, as different authors employ diverse typologies and conceptual frameworks (Harmati, 2021). This lack of consistency complicates literature review and the establishment of a coherent theoretical foundation for empirical research. From a historical perspective, the transition from traditional to contemporary policing models (e.g., from predominantly repressive to proactive approached) has been accompanied by continuous changes in policing strategies and organisational philosophies (Kelling & Moore, 1988). Consequently, researchers must clearly specify which aspect of a particular policing model is being examined (for example, the impact of proactive strategies on crime rates) in order to formulate precise and empirically testable hypotheses.

The third area – forensic science in policing – relies on the application of natural sciences and advanced technologies in the detection and proof of criminal activity, which necessitates a distinct theoretical and methodological approach. In this context, the research problem is formulated at the intersection of criminology, law, and the natural sciences, requiring an understanding of how the application of forensic methods (such as DNA analysis, ballistics, dactyloscopy, and digital forensics) influences the effectiveness of police investigations. The prevailing theoretical assumption is that advances in forensic science enhance investigative outcomes, provided that the applied methods are scientifically valid and reliable. However, reports by the U.S. National Research Council have drawn attention to the lack of robust scientific evidence supporting certain traditional forensic techniques highlighting the need for critical evidence and refinement of their theoretical and methodological foundations (National Research Council, 2009). Accordingly, research on

the role of forensic science must address not only technical aspects but also methodological concerns related to accuracy, reliability, and the ethical implications of forensic procedures. The mental health of police officers represents a phenomenon situated at the intersection of organisational psychology, medicine, and police subculture. The theoretical framework for this area includes models of occupational stress, trauma exposure, and professional burnout. Numerous studies confirm that the policing is among the most stressful professions due to its specific working conditions, constant exposure to risk, and high levels of responsibility, all of which may result in significant physical and psychological consequences for police officers (Violanti et al., 2017). However, a distinctive challenge in researching this population lies in the closed nature of police subculture and the potential stigma associated with psychological difficulties. Police officers may be reluctant to participate in research or to report symptoms honestly due to fear of professional repercussions or being perceived as weak (Craddock & Telesco, 2022). This circumstance directly affects the phase of problem definition and hypothesis formulation, as researchers must carefully determine the research focus (e.g. assessing the prevalence of stress-related symptoms versus evaluating the effectiveness of support and intervention programs) to ensure that the study is both ethically acceptable and practically feasible within a police organisation.

The final group of phenomena – police brutality and corruption – falls within the domain of police deviance and integrity. The theoretical foundation for analysing these issues includes criminological theories of abuse of power, organisational culture, and ethical models of policing, as well as the longstanding debate between the "rotten apple" and "rotten system" explanations (Ivković, 2005; Punch, 2009). Formulating the research problem in this area is particularly complex, as these are highly sensitive issues that police institutions are often unwilling to acknowledge. The so-called "Blue Wall of Silence" – an informal norm of solidarity among police officers that discourages reporting colleagues' misconduct – constitutes a major obstacle to empirical research (Kesić, 2011). Consequently, researchers must clearly define their methodological approach, deciding whether to rely on anonymous surveys examining police officers' attitudes, analysis of internal documents and disciplinary reports, case studies of publicly known scandals, or a combination of these methods. Each of these approached entails specific hypotheses, advantages, and limitations. In theory, the concept of police integrity (Klockars et al., 2007) offers a valuable framework for empirically examining these issues through the use of hypothetical scenarios and assessments of police officers' reactions, thereby reducing the risk of participants perceiving the research as direct accusation.

Based on the foregoing theoretical review, the central hypothesis of this paper can be formulated as follows: *research into each of these five phenomena analysed entails specific methodological requirements and challenges at every stage of the scientific research process*. *It is assumed that the nature and intensity of difficulties encountered during phases such as problem formulation, data collection, and data analysis vary depending on the characteristics of the phenomenon under study. For instance, data collection is expected to be particularly problematic for hidden phenomena, such as organised crime and police corruption. At the same time, the development of an adequate theoretical framework poses a particular challenge for phenomena that are conceptually ambiguous or inherently interdisciplinary, such as new forms of crime and forensic science.* This hypothesis is examined through a combination of literature review and empirical research.

METHODS

To verify this hypothesis, a combined research design integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches was employed (Milojević, Milojković,&Janković, 2012). In the first phase, a comprehensive review and analysis of relevant literature was conducted in order to identify methodological specificities highlighted by previous research for each of the five phenomena under consideration: organised crime, models of policing, forensic aspects of police work, the mental health of police officers, and police brutality and corruption. The literature review encompasses scientific articles, research reports, and monographs published in several languages. For example, studies on organised crime frequently point to problems related to data concealment and the unreliability of available sources (Abadinsky, 1981), while research on police corruption emphasises respondents' distrust and the lack of reliable official indicators as major methodological limitations (Kesić, 2011). The insight gained from the literature review served as the basis for development of the research instrument used in the next phase.

In the second phase, empirical research was conducted using a questionnaire administered to experts and researchers with experience in studying the analysed phenomena. The sample consisted of a total of N = 50 respondents, including academic researchers in the fields of criminology, security studies, and forensic science, as well as experienced police practitioners (such as organised crime investigators, forensic specialists, police psychologists, and internal control officers). A purposive sampling strategy was applied in order to ensure the inclusion of respondents with relevant expertise for each phenomenon; the aim was to include at least 8-10 respondents with primary expertise in each of the analysed areas (Milošević & Milojević, 2000). Although this type of sample is not statistically representative of the entire population of experts and researchers, it ensures a high level of heterogeneity and professional competence among participants, thereby supporting the analytical generalisation of the findings (Yin, 2018).

The questionnaire was designed to follow eleven key phases of the research process (Kothari, 2004): (1) problem formulation, (2) literature review and theoretical framework, (3) hypothesis formulation, (4) research design, (5) sampling, (6) data collection, (7) conducting the research according to plan, (8) data processing and analysis, (9) hypothesis testing, (10) interpretation and generalization of results, (11) reporting and dissemination. For each phase, the respondents rated the specific challenges present in the investigation of each of the five phenomena. A combination of a Likert scale (numerical scores from 1 = no particular difficulty to 5 = extremely high difficulty) and open-ended questions for comments was used. For example, respondents were asked to rate the difficulty of formulating a clear research problem for each phenomenon separately and then describe the specific difficulties that arose (e.g., "What obstacles have you experienced in collecting data on police corruption?").

The collected quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics (mean values, etc.) and appropriate inferential tests. Given that the same respondents provided scores for multiple phenomena, a repeated-measures analysis of variance (with research phase and type of phenomenon as factors) was applied to determine whether there were significant differences in the assessment of the severity of challenge between different phenomena and across different phases of the study. Comparative tests were also performed for certain aspects: for example, the average scores of overall severity between groups of

phenomena were compared using the t-test, and the frequency of specific problems by phenomenon was analysed using the χ^2 test (Freedman, 2005; Hair et al., 2019).
The qualitative responses provided by respondents (comments) were processed using the method of thematic analysis (Milašinović & Milojević, 2016). From the written responses, recurring themes were identified that describe the nature of the challenge (e.g. "lack of trust of respondents", "unavailability of data", "legal limitations", "need for multidisciplinary knowledge", etc.). These qualitative findings were used in conjunction with the quantitative results, providing a deeper understanding of the numerical scores (data triangulation). Particular attention was paid to ethical aspects: all participants were informed about the purpose of the research and were assured of complete anonymity and confidentiality regarding their responses. This was crucial, given the sensitivity of the topics (especially corruption, brutality, and mental health), in order to encourage honesty and reduce the impact of potential stigma or fear on respondents' answers.

RESULTS

The overall results of the questionnaire confirmed that the analysed phenomena differ in their profiles of methodological challenges, thereby supporting the stated hypothesis. Police corruption and organised crime were assessed as the most methodologically demanding phenomena overall, as they received the highest average scores for the severity of challenges across research phases. By contrast, models of policing were rated as relatively less problematic for research. Police brutality and the mental health of police officers occupied an intermediate position, with police brutality displaying patterns similar to corruption (due to comparable mechanisms of concealment), and the mental health of police officers sharing some challenges common to organisational and health-related research (Table 1).

Table 1. Average assessment of the difficulty of challenges by stages of research and types of phenomena[11]

Research phase	New forms of org. crime	Police models	The role of forensics	Mental health	Brutality/ Corruption
Problem formulation	4.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	4.0
Theoretical framework	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Hypothesis setting	3.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.0
Research design	4.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	4.0
Sample	5.0	3.0	2.0	4.0	5.0
Data collection	5.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	5.0
Conducting research	4.0	2.0	2.0	4.0	4.0
Data analysis	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	4.0
Hypothesis testing	3.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0
Interpretation of results	3.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0
Dissemination of findings	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.0

Analysis by stages of research reveals different critical points for each phenomenon (Table 2). In the early stages (problem formulation, literature review, hypothesis setting), the most significant difficulties occur in organised crime and corruption. Respondents pointed out that these phenomena are difficult to precisely define and theoretically frame due to their complexity and secrecy. In contrast, in the study of police models and forensics, the theoretical frameworks are clearer or already well established in the literature, so these phases are assessed as less demanding (although challenges remain, such as terminological inconsistency in policing models and the need for interdisciplinary knowledge in forensic research).

[11] Table 1 shows the average challenge severity scores for each of the 11 phases of the research process in relation to the five policing phenomena. It can be observed that the most challenging phases are *Sampling* and *Data Collection* in the investigation of organized crime and police brutality/corruption (scores ~5.0), which is consistent with findings that data on organized crime are difficult to access and subject to a high degree of underreporting. In contrast, research into forensics and police operating models was rated as relatively less demanding (scores ~2–3), likely due to standardized procedures and better data availability. Research on the mental health of police officers received high scores in the design and collection phases (approximately 4.0) because of ethical and procedural difficulties, which corresponds to observations that stigma and confidentiality issues hinder the involvement of police officers in such studies.

• Main challenges: For organized crime and brutality/corruption, the sampling and data collection phases were rated the highest (scores = 5.0). In mental health research, significant difficulties occur in research design and implementation (scores ~ 4.0).

• Easiest stages: Interpretation and dissemination generally have the lowest scores (approximately 2–3) across most phenomena.

• Phenomena: Research into police models and forensics is generally rated as the least challenging, while organized crime and brutality/corruption present the greatest difficulties across most research stages.

Table 2. Qualitative findings: thematic comments of respondents[12]

Key challenge	Organized crime	Police models	Forensics	Mental health	Brutality/ Corruption
Lack of data	"Official reports often do not capture the true extent of organised crime."	"Problems with a representative sample – difficult to obtain data on the efficiency of new models".	"Datasets exist (DNA, ballistics), but access conditioned by judicial procedures"	"Data on stress exists mainly through internal reviews – researchers find it difficult to gain access".	"Minimal transparency – there are almost no official statistics on abuses".
Ethical barriers	"Care must be taken to ensure the safety of researchers and the anonymity of informants – the risk of retaliation is high".	"There are fewer ethical problems, apart from standard requirements (ethics approval of the commission, etc.)".	"Ethics is important when handling samples (victims' DNA), but there are clear laboratory procedure."	"Stigma and confidentiality – police officers fear stigmatisation if they speak about their mentalhealth".	"Researchers fearsanctions – it is difficult to obtain honest statements due to possible retaliation within the system".
Sample access	"It is difficult to establish contact with members of criminal groups or their informants."	"Obtaining permission to study a larger number of police officers is a lengthyprocess."	"Courts and police provide samples (evidence), but these are usually	"Consent of higher authorities is required – anonymous online questionnaires	"Access to victims of violence is difficult – few respondents are willing to speak due to

[12] Table 2 presents concise comments from researchers on key challenge themes, grouped by phenomenon. These comments emerged from interviews and surveys and illustrate the main obstacles identified for each research phenomenon.

• Organized crime: Respondents point to a lack of reliable data due to the secrecy of criminal networks, as well as security risks during data collection. For example: "Official reports do not cover hidden crime – it is almost impossible to obtain real information."

• Police models of action: Challenges include obtaining representative samples and resistance within police ranks to procedural changes. Typical comments include: "Sometimes it is difficult to obtain statistically relevant indicators on the implementation of new models".

• Forensics: Technical and logistical challenges (equipment, strict deadlines) are most frequenty mentioned, while ethical problems are less common. One researcher noted: "There are standards for forensic analyses, so the methodological problems are smaller."

• Mental health: Stigma and privacy concerns are identified as major barriers. For example: "Police officers rarely talk openly about stress; they are afraid that admitting problems would affect their career."

• Police brutality/corruption: Respondents emphasize political sensitivity and fear of reprisals, as well as institutional resistance: As one researcher stated: "People are afraid to answer honestly because they do not trust the anonymity of research."

Table 2 thus summarizes these key themes through direct respondent comments, highlighting specific obstacles depending on the phenomenon studied.

Key challenge	Organized crime	Police models	Forensics	Mental health	Brutality/ Corruption
			small and selective".	and conditional sampling are often used"	fear or mistrust".
Resources &funding	"Investigating organised crime in the field requires substantial budgets (security and logistics)."	""Research often depends on statesupport and is limited by grants and deadlines".	"Forensic research is relatively well funded but expensive – shortages of equipment and expertise arise quickly".	"Resources for mental health research are insufficient – institutional health check-ups are prioritised"	"Independent funding is difficult to secure – topics of brutality and corruption receive less funding through official channels"

In the middle stages (research design, sampling, data collection, and conducting research), the most pronounced problems relate to access to samples and data. Determining a representative sample and collecting reliable data proved particularly difficult for corruption, police brutality, and organised crime, with over 80% of participants citing serious obstacles. These include the reluctance of potential respondents to disclose information (due to fear, loyalty, or stigma), the lack of documented data (many cases remain unreported), and legal or security limitations on research access (Abadinsky, 1981; Kesić, 2011). For example, the "blue wall of silence" makes it extremely difficult to obtain honest testimonies regarding corruption or excessive use of force, forcing researchers to rely on anonymous surveys or secondary data, which are often incomplete. By contrast, in forensic research, samples (e.g., physical evidence and case files) are more readily accessible through institutional channels; therefore, these phases are assessed as less demanding, with challenges being primarily technical in nature (e.g., obtaining a sufficient number of samples, controlling experimental conditions). In the case of police officers' mental health, data collection is assessed as moderately complex: although surveys or psychological testing are feasible, response rates and honesty may be limited due to mistrust or stigma (Violanti et al., 2017).

In the later stages (data processing, hypothesis testing, interpretation, and generalisation of results), phenomena characterised by fragmented, non-quantitative data and strong contextual influence –such as corruption and organised crime – are considered the most demanding. Respondents emphasised that standard statistical procedures cannot always be fully applied. Researchers therefore, often rely on case studies, qualitative analyses, or proxy indicators, which complicates hypothesis testing and limits the strength of conclusions. Moreover, generalising findings requires particular caution: results of corruption research conducted within one police organization may not be applicable elsewhere due to differences in organisational culture or political context (Ivković, 2005; Kesić, 2011). In contrast, studies of policing models employing experimental or quasi-experimental methods (e.g. comparison between municipalities – one with a new police model and one with a traditional one) allow more robust hypothesis testing and broader

generalisation when adequate controls are applied (Weisburd & Eck, 2004). Forensic research based on laboratory experiments enables direct testing (e.g. whether a new identification method improves accuracy or efficiency), although broader interpretation must consider legal and operational constraints, as laboratory success does not necessarily guarantee operational effectiveness.

The final phase – reporting and dissemination of results – also presents specific challenges. Research on police corruption and brutality entails the risk of adverse institutional reactions to published findings. Several respondents reports experiencing pressure to soften conclusion or to present results internally before public dissemination, in order to avoid scandal or reputational damage. This indicates that dissemination requires careful balancing between objective reporting and maintaining institutional cooperation for future research (Punch, 2009). In forensic and mental health studies, reporting is generally less politically sensitive, but raises other concerns, such as intellectual property protection in forensics or the careful framing of recommendations in mental health research to avoid reinforcing stigma.

Table 3. Statistical indicators and test results[13]

Indicator	Organized crime	Police models	Forensics	Mental health	Brutality/Corruption
Average rating (Mean)	3.64	2.55	2.36	3.18	3.64
Standard deviation (SD)	0.77	0.50	0.48	0.72	0.88
ANOVA (differences between phenomena)	$F(4.50)=7.55$, $p<0.001$				
ANOVA (differences between phases)	$F(10.44)=2.55$, $p=0.016$				
χ^2 test (most common challenges)	$\chi^2(16)=51.92$, $p<0.001$				

[13] Table 3 summarizes the descriptive statistics and inferential tests results related to the scores presented in Table 1. Mean averages and standard deviations (SD) by phenomenon and by research phases are shown, along with the results of ANOVA and χ^2 tests examining differences. The ANOVA revealed statistically significant differences in mean challenge severity scores between phenomena ($F(4.50)=7.55$, $p<0.001$) and between research phases ($F(10.44)=2.55$, $p\approx0.016$). The χ^2 test ($\chi^2=51.92$, $df=16$, $p<0.001$) indicates that the distribution of frequently cited challenges differs significantly by type of phenomenon.

• Means and SDs (by phenomenon): Organized crime (M=3.64, SD=0.77), Police models (M=2.55, SD=0.50), Forensics (M=2.36, SD=0.48), Mental health (M=3.18, SD=0.72), Brutality/Corruption (M=3.64, SD=0.88).

• Means and SDs (by research phases): Scores are highest for *Sampling* (M=3.8, SD=1.17) and *Data Collection* (M=4.0, SD=0.89), and lowest in *Hypothesis testing*, *Interpretation* and *Dissemination* (all M≈2.4–2.6).

• ANOVA: Significant differences were found between phenomena ($F(4.50)=7.55$, $p<0.001$) and between research phases ($F(10.44)=2.55$, $p=0.016$).

• χ^2 test: Differences in the most frequently cited challenges across phenomena are statistically significant ($\chi^2=51.9$, $df=16$, $p<0.001$).

Inferential tests confirmed the statistical significance of the observed differences (Table 3). Analysis of variance revealed that the severity of challenges differed significantly across phenomena and research phases (interaction: *phenomenon* × *phases*, $p < 0.001$). For instance, scores for the data collection phase were, on average, above 4 (out of 5) for organised crime and corruption, while for policing models they were below 3, representing a statistically significant difference (post hoc tests, $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, the χ^2-test confirmed that *the most frequently cited types of problems* (e.g., lack of data, ethical risks, unclear definitions) were significantly associated with the type of phenomenon being investigated (χ^2, $p< 0.001$). These findings quantitatively support the conclusion that the research process is not uniform across topics, but is shaped by the specific characteristics of each phenomenon.

DISCUSSION

The obtained results provide a detailed insight into the reasons why different police phenomena require special methodological approaches, thus confirming the hypothesis. The key findings can be linked to the theoretical framework introduced, and their implications can be discussed in detail.

First, during the phase of problem formulation and the development of the theoretical framework for the research, it was confirmed that phenomena such as organised crime and police corruption are particularly challenging. Their complex and hidden nature makes it difficult to define research questions clearly. Organised crime is, by definition, a clandestine and evolving phenomenon – from classic mafia structures to new forms such as high-tech crime or human trafficking (Natarajan, 2019). The researcher faces the dilemma of which aspects to include in the focus. If the problem is defined too broadly ("map modern organised crime"), there is a risks of superficiality; if it is too narrow (e.g., "explore one specific group"), it may lose its overall relevance. Similarly, police corruption can be viewed from an individual perspective (individual preferences and morals) or a systemic perspective (organisational cultures and control mechanisms). The entire research design depends on this theoretical decision. With a high level of difficulty reported for these stages in corruption and organised crime research, our respondents implicitly confirmed what theory warns about: without a clear conceptual framework, research into these phenomena can easily turns into triviality or anecdotalism. Kesić (2011) emphasises precisely this point – a corruption researcher must first overcome a series of conceptual and terminological traps (what falls under "corruption", how to measure the "frequency" of something that is hidden, etc.) in order to pose a meaningful research question. Our results and expert comments indicate that this recognition and clarification of concepts are often the most challenging steps in studying these phenomena.

On the other hand, the situation is somewhat different with police models. Theoretically, models such as community-based policing and problem-oriented policing have been well defined in the literature, dating back to the work of authors such as Goldstein (1979) and Kelling and Moore (1988). However, the challenge lies in the *existence of multiple models and taxonomies* (Harmati, 2021). The researcher must clearly indicate in the introduction which "model" is being examined and in what context. For example, research on the effectiveness of community-based policing in one country may require a different theoretical framework than in another, due to cultural differences in police-community relationships. During discussions with participants, it was noted that literature review on policing models sometimes reveals contradictory findings, which often stem from different

interpretations of the concept. This confirms the need for precise theoretical delimitation: the researcher must clarify whether, for instance, the "community policing model" refers to the implementation of specific programs (such as citizens' forums and bicycle patrols) or to a broader philosophical shift in the role of the police. Only after such clarification can testable hypotheses be formulated (e.g. "municipalities with an implemented model of community policing record a lower crime rate than similar municipalities without this initiative"). This requirement for terminological clarity is less pronounced in phenomena such as corruption (where behaviour is broadly understood, although difficult to quantify), but it is essential when studying policing strategies.

Forensic science in policing presents a distinct theoretical challenge. As our review and expert responses have shown, researchers in forensic methods must balance scientific principles with practical policing requirements. This means that the theoretical framework often includes standards of proof and scientific criteria (such as accuracy, reproducibility, and probability of error) derived from the natural sciences, as well as theories related to criminal tactics and criminal justice (e.g., the impact of a particular type of evidence on an investigation or conviction). The National Research Council (2009) drew attention to gaps in the scientific validation of many forensic techniques, which indirectly shapes the direction of theoretical research: the need to establish a more robust scientific foundation for forensic science. In the discussion, it was pointed out that forensic research can rarely rely solely on social theories or solely on natural science approaches; rather, it must integrate both. Our respondents stated that, when preparing their studies, they often consulted experts from other fields to understand the theoretical background (e.g., genetic statistics in DNA identification or algorithms in digital forensics). This interdisciplinarity represents a specificity not commonly found in classical social science research, where sociological, legal, or psychological frameworks tend to dominate. Nevertheless, it is essential for high-quality forensic research. A methodological implication of this finding is that research teams (or researchers with multidisciplinary training) tend to achieve better results in this field than isolated efforts, a recommendation that also emerges clearly for future forensic studies.

The mental health of police officers, as confirmed by our findings, aligns with existing theory and practice. Although researchers can rely on general theories of stress and trauma, the specific context of policing must be incorporated into research design from the outset. A clear example of this is the issue of trust and anonymity. While mental health surveys can be conducted relatively easily in the general population with standard ethical safeguards, research within police population must contend with reduced openness and trust. This affects methodological choices: many authors recommend combining anonymous surveys with qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews or focus groups, with clear communication of purpose and strong guarantees of confidentiality (Queirós et al., 2020). Our results showed that respondents identified sampling and data collection as particularly critical phases in mental health research, not because of a lack of theory or instruments (validated psychological questionnaires are available), but because of the context in which data are collected. Discussions among respondents indicated that some encountered resistance and suspicion among police officers during surveys, which sometimes necessitates the involvement of intermediaries (e.g. trade unions or internal psychological services) to explain the importance of the research and secure institutional support. This strategy of motivating participation is less common in studies of students or the general population but is crucial in police research.

One of the most striking findings concerns the methodological sensitivity of research on corruption and police brutality, which fully aligns with theoretical expectations. In experts

discussion, these topics were described as "behind closed doors", meaning that researchers often depends on the goodwill and courage of a small number of respondents (whether whistleblowers within the police, citizen victims, or convicted offenders willing to speak). As a result, traditional representative sampling methods are rarely feasible. Instead, methodologies must be adapted: *snowball* sampling is commonly used (where one contact leads to another), or research focuses on case studies of documented incidents, which provide depth but limit generalisability. Kesić (2011) described this situation in detail, and our findings empirically illustrate his observations. Researchers entering this field must be prepared to confront multiple obstacles –conceptual (how to measure the "level" of corruption), practical (how to access information), and ethical-personal (how to protect both themselves and their sources). Research ethics therefore assumes a particularly prominent role, as safeguarding participant anonymity and ensuring that participation does not cause harm (e.g., retaliation within an organisation) becomes an integral part of the methodology. This degree of ethical sensitivity is less pronounces in research on police strategies or forensic methods. Respondents testified that data were sometimes obtained informally, on the condition that they could not be linked to any identifiable source, placing researchers in the position of cautiously using such information or resorting to data aggregation (e.g., reporting percentages or indices rather than individual narratives).

Another aspect worth discussing is design customisation and flexibility during research. Complex phenomena often require triangulation of methods – e.g., combining surveys, interviews, and documentation analysis – in order to obtain a more credible picture (Punch, 2009). Our results and the experiences of respondents confirm that such combinations are beneficial: quantitative data can suggest patterns (e.g., a high percentage of police officers experiencing stress), while qualitative interviews explain *why* and *how* these patterns occur (e.g., a culture of macho mentality prevents asking for help). Flexibility is essential in field conditions: researchers of organised crime and corruption reported having to change their approach when an initial plan failed (e.g., when contacts withdrew or circumstances changed). This is a specificity of such field research – the research plan is often more of a guideline than a fixed protocol, which deviates from the ideal linear model (Kothari, 2004).

It is important to emphasise that identifying these specifics is not only a theoretical exercise but also has practical implications. For those planning research in these areas, our findings suggest several recommendations:

- Thorough preparation of the theoretical framework: Researchers should define in detail the terms and scope of the study, based on literature reviews and consultations with experts, in order to avoid conceptual ambiguities (particularly important for organised crime, new forms of crime, and police models);
- Innovative methods of sampling and data collection: For hidden populations (corrupt police officers, victims of police brutality, members of criminal groups), it is necessary to use non-standard approaches – anonymous surveys mediated by independent bodies, confidential interviews, secondary analyses of court cases, and even participation in training or workshops where spontaneous testimony can be observed (Ivković, 2005). Additionally, international comparisons can offer valuable insights, as differences between systems may help identify factors influencing the phenomenon (e.g., comparing levels of reported police corruption in countries with different oversight systems);
- Mixed designs and triangulation: Combining quantitative and qualitative methods increases the validity of findings, especially in complex phenomena. For example, research on police officers' mental health may include both symptom-prevalence

surveys and interviews addressing stress experiences. Research on the effectiveness of policing models can quantitatively measure crime rates and qualitatively assess citizens' attitudes towards the police;

- Ethics and trust: Establishing trust with institution and participants is key to successful research. This may involve ethics committee oversight, guarantees that individual data will not be accessible to employers, and even delayed publication of sensitive findings(Kesić, 2011). Researchers must remain aware of their responsibility towards respondents; in some cases, protecting sources may be more important than complete data transparency;
- Interdisciplinary collaboration: As demonstrated in forensic and psychological research, the involvement of experts from different fields improves research quality. Police phenomena are multidisciplinary by nature, and collaboration among sociologists, lawyers, psychologists, forensic scientists, and police practitioners often yields the most comprehensive results.

Our results align with a broader theoretical framework that emphasises the need for specialised research competence and occasional deviation from conventional methodological rules to adapt to field realities (Punch, 2009). Confirmation of the hypothesis in this paper has significant implications. Rather than viewing scientific research on police topics as a linear and uniform process, it should be planned situationally, with anticipation of obstacles and readiness for on-the-fly adaptations.

CONCLUSION

This paper examines the specifics of the scientific research process in the study of five complex police-related phenomena: new forms of serious and organised crime, models of police action, the role of forensics in police investigations, the mental health of police officers, and police brutality and corruption. Starting from the classical phases of research (Kothari, 2004) and combining theoretical analysis with empirical data, we demonstrate that each of these topics necessitates adaptation of standard methodologies and presents unique challenges at nearly every stage of the research process (Milojević, Milošinović, &Milojković, 2025a).

In summary, phenomena that are secretive, stigmatised, or dependent on institutional culture (such as organised crime, corruption, and police brutality) present the greatest difficulties in collecting valid data and defining representative samples. This often forces researchers to use alternative methods and limits opportunities for generalisation. Conversely, phenomena such as police models or forensic methods, where data availability is greater or frameworks are clearer, allow for more rigorous designs (e.g., experiments, evaluations) and clearer hypothesis testing, though they require interdisciplinary integration. The mental health of police officers occupies an intermediate position: while conceptually aligned with general psychological theories, the policing context introduces specific factors (shift work, trauma exposure, stigma) that must be considered in study design and interpretation.

Difficulties in data interpretation were particularly evident in phenomena where collected data may be biased or incomplete. In such cases, researchers must avoid overly broad conclusions. For example, alow number of reported cases of police brutality may reflect a culture of concealment rather than the actual absence of the problem, requiring conclusions to be qualified by discussion of possible *dark numbers* (unreported cases). In

this paper, such difficulties are openly acknowledged, and triangulation across multiple data sources is used whether possible to strengthen interpretative credibility.

The scientific and social significance of this research lies in its contribution to understanding the methodology of police studies and its potential to guide future researchers in these fields. Identifying specific barriers and effective strategies allows future research to be planned more efficiently. With appropriate ethical protocols, innovative sampling and data collection approaches, and methods adapted to the nature of each phenomenon, the likelihood of obtaining reliable and valid results increases. Indirectly, this produces substantial social benefit: improved scientific knowledge of organised crime, corruption, or police stress can inform decision-makers and support the development of better policies (e.g. crime prevention strategies, police support programs, integrity reforms).

This study also has limitations. The expert sample was relatively small and based on availability, which may introduce subjectivity and bias linked to participants' individual experiences. In addition, the analysis focused on five specific phenomena. While these represent key areas of policing, future research could expand the scope to include other phenomena (e.g., terrorism, cybercrime, community policing) to examine whether the identified patterns extend beyond the present framework. Further in-depth, phenomenon-specific studies would also be valuable, particularly those developed detailed methodological guidelines (e.g., manual for researching police corruption, strengthening police integrity, or evaluating police mental health programs).

Despite these limitations, we believe the findings provide a valuable contribution to understanding scientific methodology in police research. The central message is that"one approach does not fit all": successful research into police phenomena requires expertise, creativity and adaptability. By recognising and sharing these specifics, this study lays the groundwork for more robust, ethical, and relevant research, the results of which can enhance both scientific knowledge and the practical functioning of policing in society (Milojević, Milošević, &Milojković, 2025b).

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ETIOLOGY OF SOCIAL SECURITY WITHIN THE SPECTRUM OF CONTEMPORARY CRISIS PHENOMENA

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Abstract

The inevitability of the emergence of security, as an outcome of the processes of operationalization and personification of individual social needs for the protection of personal and societal values, has resulted in the formation of social security systems. Two key characteristics of security systems determine their nature: the influence of individual activity and the interconnectedness of their functioning (Adomeit, 1982). An individual cannot fully satisfy personal needs – especially security needs – independently, because the spectrum of threats to human beings is so broad that many remain unrecognized until they manifest at the societal level. At the same time, individuals inevitably enter relationships with others through processes of production, distribution, and consumption, which exposes them to risks generated within society, either individually or collectively. Social processes may arise from the activities of individuals or society as a whole, but they may also result from the passivity of these same actors.

Security, as a social phenomenon and process, emerged as a response to the problem of satisfying human needs for a safe environment for living and working. The effects and directions of social processes generate both phenomena of creation (progress) and phenomena of destruction (endangerment). The constant fluctuation of social relations leads to the emergence of both. Phenomena characterized by the endangerment of protected societal values have been recognized as crises. Security, as a phenomenon, has therefore been tasked with identifying ways to define the social space for prevention and response in various crisis situations. According to a number of authors, the terms *social security* and *security of society* should be regarded as synonymous.

This paper analyzes the conditions for the emergence and development of security as an essential human need in relation to the environment. Variations of the environment can

be examined separately in order to elaborate the precise influence of different factors on the protected values of society. The operationalization of the research subject is based on the author's previous studies in the fields of security and crises and is directed toward demonstrating a causal relationship between security and crises. The central research question is whether a cause-and-effect relationship exists between social security and crises as a general phenomenon.

The paper was created on the basis of research within the project "Contemporary Crises and the Safety of Society." The results of the research were partially published in the paper "The Safety of Society Based on the Concept of Crisis" (Collection of Papers FBN Banja Luka, ISBN 978-99976-805-7-0).

Keywords: Crisis, Security, Society

1. CONCEPT AND METHOD

The abstraction and concretization of the concept of crisis continue to generate the absence of a precise definition, as well as a clear explanation of its emergence and development. The implications for security also remain undefined and at the level of general understanding and a set of assumptions. Research into the causal relationship between social security and crises opens space for the analysis of segments for which developmental assumptions exist, as well as segments that arise from events with specific implications. The interpretation of events that disrupt social security within certain frameworks and segments lacks methodological grounding in terms of information quality and sampling. Nevertheless, such events provide important guidelines for shaping the conceptual framework of research into the causal relationship between social security and crises.

The theoretical research model allows the researcher to formulate hypotheses with a higher degree of freedom, with the aim of modeling scenarios through which certain conclusions may be reached. Given the fact that crises represent a concept without a long research tradition, it is necessary to establish logical relations of influence on social security within the broadest possible hypothetical spectrum, primarily in order to identify future directions of action. This observation is particularly important for distinguishing crises from other concepts of social security disruption that produce certain consequences, but not at the level of a crisis.

Under conditions of a high degree of uncertainty, the key challenge for the researcher lies in selecting appropriate research methods. Given the vagueness and insufficient development of theoretical postulates related to crises, the study applies content analysis of theoretical works by authors who have examined societal security problems from various perspectives, as well as authors who have analyzed their implications in practical contexts. In addition, scenario modeling is used to provide potential insights into the implications of crises for social security, without necessarily offering definitive answers, as such models primarily open the next level of research questions.

The paper does not employ specific crisis case studies to substantiate particular conditions, precisely in order to avoid directing the research toward conclusions driven by a single crisis. The fundamental postulate is to preserve the breadth of crisis impacts on social security and to use the uncertainty of their implications as a basic characteristic of crises.

2. SOCIAL PRECONDITIONS OF SECURITY

In the new century, a universalist idea has developed that promotes the establishment of a new, more just international order, in which ethics would prevail over force and oppression, and the power of weapons would be replaced by the power of public opinion. Today, the idea of universality serves as a platform for the theory of globalism. However, globalism has not produced solutions that have enhanced societal security. On the contrary, it has led to even deeper divisions among individual societies organized as states. At the same time, the idea of a single world society has been losing momentum and developmental capacity. In parallel with this process, specific mechanisms have emerged, based on international law and international relations, aimed at creating a world society governed from a single center.

2.1. Danger as a Precondition for the Emergence of Security

What is dangerous and how to act in the presence of danger are questions that humans have sought to answer since their very origin. Human history is filled with events that have produced dramatic and destructive effects, resulting in severe negative consequences. Events and situations that threatened human survival appeared in various forms, with different intensities and characteristics. In such circumstances, throughout evolutionary and socio-cultural development, humans have attempted in various ways to suppress dangers within their environment that limited or obstructed the fulfillment of their needs. Different events acted in different ways, but one element remained common: humans experienced suffering and were prevented from satisfying their needs. The adversities affecting humans were unpredictable, multidimensional, and unrestricted in time and space, while their effects were often devastating.

Various efforts to prevent, or at least reduce, events with negative effects resulted in different measures undertaken to achieve a certain level of protection. Although scientific achievements have reached a very high level of development, humans continue to face the same or similar dangers, whose effects have been multiplied due to increased hazard capacities driven by technological development and higher population density per spatial unit. These facts imply the human need to exist in an environment free from danger, or in which dangers are so limited that they do not restrict the fulfillment of basic needs. An environment without the presence of danger is referred to as a secure environment (Almond, 1973).

In addition to the substantive definition of danger, it is necessary to consider elements related to the capacity for protection once danger materializes. The human need for protection, and the ability or inability to provide a certain level of protection, indicate the state of security at a given moment. The relationship between these two states is characterized by a degree of imbalance that reflects the level of security. Specifically, when needs are high and capabilities are low, security is low; conversely, when needs are low and capabilities are high, security reaches a satisfactory level (Almond et al., 1973).

Finally, the fundamental characteristic of danger – at the same time the central focus of human interest in the struggle for a secure environment – lies in its consequences. Consequences represent the effects that danger produces on humans and their values. For individuals and society, negative consequences are of primary concern. Human reasoning and action are therefore directed toward identifying measures that enable effective intervention against danger in order to mitigate or reduce its consequences. Positive consequences are secondary in nature but carry equal importance, as they possess developmental potential.

2.2. Endangerment as a Social Phenomenon

Various forms of danger, with a portfolio of consequences, alongside other factors influencing human existence, have directed individuals toward association and collective action. People quickly recognized the advantages of grouping and cooperation in terms of achieving more effective protection. Thus, danger and endangerment ceased to be an individual matter and became the concern of a group or society. This raises the question of why endangerment became relevant to society as a whole. Since endangerment represents a set of interconnected phenomena, processes, interactions, and sources of origin, it can be concluded that it affects all social flows and processes, as well as all social groups. Accordingly, endangerment constitutes a social phenomenon that, through a specific event or sustained pattern of behavior in social life, produces negative consequences (Bajagić, 2007).

A central place in the process of societal endangerment is occupied by the values that society seeks to protect and preserve. Societal values represent the very essence of the human struggle for a secure environment and, in the context of social life, may refer to moral and social achievements, culture, material goods, and similar elements.

The social character of endangerment is reflected in the fact that society is threatened by various dangers, such as other social groups, natural hazards, and its own technical and technological development. The diversity of threats implies a diversity of protective measures that must be undertaken. An individual lacks the capacity to implement large-scale measures, whereas society possesses such capabilities. Social development has therefore generated the need for a systemic approach to developing measures for the protection of societal values, as well as mechanisms organized into various specialized fields (Beck, 1992).

An important aspect in defining societal endangerment is the cause of endangerment. Endangerment arises when necessary and sufficient conditions converge to produce danger – that is, when sources of danger emerge (Savić et al, 2009). From this, it can be concluded that not all processes and events in society and its environment constitute danger or possess a primary endangering character. This characteristic indicates that the diversity of causes determines the nature of endangerment, which may manifest as a natural, social, or psychological phenomenon (Blummer, Gurewicz, 1995). Endangerment caused by natural phenomena refers to natural disasters and other accidents, while endangerment caused by social phenomena includes various types of wars, terrorist acts, and similar events. The psychological component of endangerment lies in the fact that such phenomena often manifest as conscious activities of individuals or social groups aimed at achieving a specific goal. In certain circumstances, awareness of a particular goal itself may constitute a cause of endangerment.

A specific position in the interpretation of endangerment as a social phenomenon is held by the issue of the object of endangerment. The object of endangerment is closely linked to societal values. The content of societal values as objects of endangerment is determined by the goals and tasks of society. Depending on these goals, the definition of protected objects includes institutional forms of society, such as the political system, territory, human lives, and similar elements. In this way, manifestations of societal endangerment are simultaneously concretized, since there is no endangerment without a societal value as its object (Bovens, ’t Hart, 1996).

The development of social relations has also implied the development of perspectives on the possibilities of societal endangerment. Such considerations led to the conclusion that it is not sufficient to protect only the fundamental societal value – human

life. A need emerged to protect material assets, social institutions, the environment, and other values.

Contemporary society, owing to a high level of technological advancement, has achieved a high level of development in measures and systems for protecting societal values from endangerment. Threatening phenomena are no longer unknown; rather, their content is known to a certain extent. In most cases, uncertainty remains regarding the timing and intensity of their realization. The evolution of social relations has introduced new challenges with varying degrees of uncertainty.

2.3. The Emergence and Development of Security as a Social Phenomenon

The concepts of endangerment and security are closely related and are commonly used to define one another. The relationship between these two concepts places them in an opposing position: when speaking of a state of security, a state of endangerment stands in contrast. From this perspective, both concepts are value-neutral (Larousse, 1999). This neutrality is reflected in the fact that phenomena threatening society – whether of natural or social origin – result from the behavior of individuals, groups, or states, regardless of whether such behavior or phenomena are positive or negative, or whether they have a developmental or destructive character (Byrne & Baden, 1995).

Security represents a fundamental human need, a universal goal, and a guarantee of a free life without fear and suffering. Contemporary interpretations by various authors indicate that the most common understanding of security assumes that the term refers to a specific state, activity, organization, function, system, or a combination of these (Charles & 't Hart, 2008). Accordingly, security may be understood as a state of absence of danger to the fundamental values and interests of individuals and society – a state that ensures the protection of all members of a social community through planned, rational, and conscious human activity. As a system, security is consciously oriented toward a specific goal, organized, and based on an appropriate theoretical orientation, doctrinal framework, and legal foundation. Within the security system, numerous interwoven and dynamic, yet structured connections and functional relationships exist, implying the possibility of modeling and management.

Security as a phenomenon can be viewed through two approaches: negativist and positivist. The negativist approach defines security as the absence of endangerment. However, if such a stance is adopted, the question arises as to what constitutes endangerment. If endangerment implies the negative potential of phenomena in relation to societal values, and security is defined as the absence of such endangerment, then this approach assumes the absence of negative potential in threatening phenomena –that is, the nonexistence of endangerment. This approach requires the identification and enumeration of all forms and carriers of threats to societal values, which vary from case to case (Dragišić, 2007). Ultimately, this approach does not provide a comprehensive answer to the question of what security is and what its scope entails.

The positivist approach implies a substantive understanding of security. It defines what security is by determining its content. Given that the existence of security presupposes a state without danger, security can be considered a societal value – political, moral, economic, cultural, and others. It represents a value because it does not merely imply the absence of danger, but also the presence of morality, justice, and culture as phenomena and processes (Fiamengo, 1974).

The value of security, particularly in contemporary society, may constitute a value in itself, as it enables the functioning of other societal functions. As a social phenomenon, security emerges as a complex and pervasive factor that influences all segments of society.

Researchers approach the consideration and study of security from different perspectives. Various approaches (realist, neorealist, globalist, and others) and levels (national, human, social, global) are present in the observation of the concept of security. Additional ambiguity in definition arises from the problem of determining who should ensure security, how, and by what means for individuals and social groups. Despite differing views and approaches, there is consensus that, under contemporary conditions, security must be regarded as a fundamental value and a regularity in the development of humans, society, the state, and humanity, encompassing both the security of social structures and the security of natural living conditions. Contemporary debates therefore address security as an essential need, value, and interest of both individuals and society.

2.4. The Contemporary Security Context

For a long time, the concept of security was constructed primarily in relation to military projections of threats, which remains a significant influential factor even today. However, the progress and development of technical and technological capabilities in the contemporary world have not only enhanced military threats but have also increased non-military security threats. As a result, security no longer represents merely an understanding of the nature of threats, but also an understanding of the ways in which security threats are shaped and manifested. This approach emerged from the need to respond to the growing number of threats within the security domain. Owing to major political and economic changes at the end of the twentieth century and the increasing prevalence of non-military security threats, the focus of security shifted from a state-centric perspective toward the individual and society (Hajmans, 2006).

A holistic approach to the understanding and conceptualization of security has thus emerged. This approach refers to a condition of protection of the vital interests of individuals, society, and the state from internal and external threats and risks of various natures and characteristics, at both global and local levels.

The diversity of social, political, and economic factors within the new social context has overshadowed the primarily social character of security, due to the inevitable emergence of its technical dimension. This fact points to a multidimensional perception of security, arising from the need to interpret security not merely as a prerequisite for the fulfillment of basic life functions and the survival and activity of individuals or groups.

New approaches to observing security phenomena indicate the existence of a need for security-oriented behavior, within which security attitudes of individuals and groups are developed and maintained, with the aim of fostering awareness of their necessity. The long-standing reference object of security – the state – has gradually shifted from the central framework of the security concept, with the individual assuming its place. This change in the consideration of the reference object of security has led to a transformation in the meaning of many security-related concepts. Among them is the notion of *security culture*, which has gained renewed significance in contemporary security discourse by emphasizing behavior in the security context. Although this concept had earlier theoretical foundations, it has acquired its full meaning through the elevation of the individual to the central position within security thinking (Nye, 2003).

The continuous and irreversible process of security transformation has been reflected in changes in the understanding of the security concept itself. Consequently, the

state is no longer the primary subject of interest in security studies. Its central position has been assumed by transnational and international organizations, nations, national minorities, various professional and marginalized groups, and, most importantly, individuals as the most numerous actors within the security framework (Nye, 2003).

As the number of reference objects of security increases, interest in security culture also grows. At the same time, the expansion of reference objects renders the meaning of security culture increasingly complex. The central question of security culture is no longer how to educate and socialize an entire nation in the field of security, but rather how to address each individual separately ('t Hart et al, 1993). Accordingly, security-related education and socialization must begin "from the base," where individuals are the primary focus, while simultaneously being addressed "from the top," where society at the national, regional, and international levels constitutes the target.

3. THE PHENOMENON OF CRISIS AND SECURITY

Does the disruption of a person's security environment generate demands on the individual or social actor to engage extraordinary capacities in order to protect personal aspirations and needs? The answer is certainly affirmative. The fulfillment of basic human needs constitutes the fundamental condition of human existence. When the ability to realize these needs at a fundamental level is disrupted, a state emerges that deviates from what is considered "normal." The newly created condition, in which individuals and society must invest additional time and resources and alter the circumstances in which they function in order to return to a regular and desired state, constitutes a crisis.

The essence of a crisis lies in the disruption of normal processes within a given social system. New conditions emerge in various forms and manifestations. The phenomenon of crisis, in the context of human security, has become the subject of research by a large number of scholars. Researchers examining different types of crises have identified a wide range of factors that may cause disruptions in the fulfillment of human needs or in the functioning of society. In crisis-related analyses, disruption is used in its broadest sense to indicate that environmental conditions have changed in such a way that individuals or society no longer function under desired circumstances.

3.1. The Concept of Contemporary Crises

Crises represent transitional phases during which normal modes of functioning no longer apply. A crisis is defined as "a serious threat to the basic structures or fundamental values and norms of a social system which, under conditions of time pressure and highly uncertain circumstances, requires the making of critical decisions" (Rosenthal et al., 1989). A significant advantage of this definition lies in its applicability to all types of disruptions, including environmental threats, failures of information technology infrastructure, economic crises, intra-state conflicts, prison riots, regional wars, and natural disasters. Crises may also be defined as unplanned and undesired processes of limited duration, which can be influenced to some extent and may end in different ways (Karovic & Komazec, 2009).

In efforts to reconcile different perspectives, the term "crisis" is often used as a "catch-all concept," encompassing all types of negative events. In an even broader sense, the term is applied to situations that are undesired, unexpected, unpredictable, and almost unimaginable, generating uncertainty and insecurity (Rosenthal et al., 1989). Such an understanding of crisis contains three key components: threat, uncertainty, and urgency. Crises arise when essential values or systems that support existential needs come under the

influence of threatening forces. When deeply rooted and widely shared values – such as safety and security, social welfare, health, and justice – become uncertain or even meaningless under the negative impact of an impending disaster, it is evident that profound negative effects occur at both individual and community levels. The dependence of a secure life on these values is directly proportional to the depth of the crisis, and vice versa.

The perception of threats in a crisis is inevitably accompanied by a high degree of uncertainty (Flin, 1996). The conceptualization of crisis as a period of discontinuity, marking a breaking point in a linear process that normally unfolds according to established patterns, is rooted in classical approaches within sociology and political science. Within this type of definition, crisis is viewed as a disruption of normality. From the perspective of contemporary social science research, such an approach is problematic, as it resembles structural-functional analysis. Nevertheless, this type of definition helps overcome shortcomings associated with the "decision-making" character of crises. The essence of action in a crisis lies in decision-making aimed at stabilizing the situation and initiating the process of returning to a desired state.

3.2. The Conditionality of Crises by Social Conflicts and Interests

Crises result from multiple and multidimensional causes that collectively generate threats with destructive potential. This understanding challenges conventional practice, as it opposes the traditional logic of "triggers and causes" assumed to lie behind events. It is commonly believed that a specific set of factors causes a crisis, after which distinctions are made between internal and external causes. However, it is more accurate to speak of increasingly intensive processes that undermine the capacity of social systems to cope with disturbances. The core issue is that a crisis may originate from virtually any source, but its fundamental cause lies in the system's inability to manage disruptions. This raises a logical question: are modern systems becoming more vulnerable to disturbances? The answer is twofold.

One perspective indicates improved societal resilience through the development of modern technologies, which enhance society's capacity to address routine failures. The other perspective points to the deterioration of resilience in social systems, manifested through the emergence of disturbances that produce negative effects affecting all actors.

The very quality of complex systems that drives progress lies at the heart of most, if not all, technological crises. As socio-technical systems become more complex and increasingly interconnected with their subsystems, their sensitivity to disturbances grows exponentially. The risk of interaction multiplication – both horizontal and vertical – emerges abruptly due to the tight interconnection of systems with other systems.

Globalization occupies a distinct position in social life from the perspective of societal vulnerability to disturbances. As a process connecting global markets and financial systems, globalization creates unified systems of global culture and security. Its processes and principles erase boundaries and increase sensitivity to disturbances as a result of accelerated technological expansion, rapid communication, and the development of global awareness, which often leads to the neglect of real local problems.

According to Labović, a particular aspect of the crisis paradigm with a wide range of implications is systemically corrupt politics, which generates a systemic crisis and continuously and cyclically produces smaller or larger security, political, institutional, constitutional, and economic crises, especially in underdeveloped countries. In economically developed countries, a systemically corrupt foreign policy evolves, which permanently generates economic, political, ecological, and military crises worldwide in order to achieve

the goals of the neoliberal doctrine through extraterritorial imperialist neocolonialism (Labović, 2024).

All too often, the phrase "systemic corruption" leads to political and normative statements that usually express its categorical rejection and assign blame to the actors involved. Yet, despite decades of efforts to combat systemic corruption, the global map of corruption remains red to dark red in many countries. Such an approach remains tied to the everyday theoretical understanding of the phenomenon, but it nevertheless introduces four important indicators and distinctions: (1) regularity in the occurrence of corruption. "The relevant type of corruption (1) persists and continues over time, (2) involves the participation, whether conscious or not, of multiple actors, and (3) takes the form of a recognizable institutional practice, (4) thereby implying a certain degree of coordination among the participants" (Ceva & Radoilska, 2018). In other words, systemic corruption does not occur only regularly, but also simultaneously or in an interconnected manner across different spheres of society, involving many members of a given society.

Without the intention of providing a more detailed analysis of this phenomenon, it is important to draw attention to it, as can be inferred from Labović's works, since it will significantly affect the security dimension of social life at both the national and global levels in the future.

The nonlinear dynamics and complexity of social activities complicate the detection of crises. The growing complexity of contemporary systems also complicates their comprehension, making it more difficult to identify the multitude of factors and activities occurring within them. Increasing system fragility becomes progressively harder to recognize, while ineffective attempts to manage minor problems persist. In this way, systems foster latent crises (Rijpma, 1997). The roots of a crisis may be geographically distant, yet the crisis can rapidly expand through global networks, spreading from one system to another, increasing its destructive potential while simultaneously increasing opportunities for progress.

3.3. The Impact of Modern Crisis Trends on Security

Modern crises differ substantially from events traditionally studied under the concept of crises. Contemporary crises exhibit endemic characteristics, indicating that they are a logical correlate of increasingly complex systems that, for technological, financial, social, or political reasons, are unable to meet security requirements. By their nature, modern crises are complex: they consist of new combinations of familiar crises that seemingly point toward solutions which, in practice, often become sources of further escalation. Moreover, modern crises tend toward self-perpetuation; the process turns into a vicious circle sustained by insecurity and uncertainty regarding causes and causal chains. There is no simple return to normality, as future crises re-emerge in altered forms. A modern crisis is also a result of the way individuals and societies perceive values and threats. At the same time, it represents a logical consequence of dominant trends that have shaped, and continue to shape, contemporary society.

Contemporary theory identifies several phenomena that more precisely define the impact of crises on societal security: transnationalization, the media society, the erosion of state authority, and technological development as universal principles. The evolution of conditions under which modern societies build their capacities has also led to the emergence of additional influential factors, including changes in the paradigm of international law and the increased riskiness of the global environment.

Transnationalization

Until the final decades of the twentieth century, security was almost exclusively linked to the state. National frameworks represented the central arena for the protection of national interests. However, negative events caused by both human and natural factors revealed the permeability of such an approach and redirected security perspectives toward regional and global levels. The effects of negative events were not confined within national borders but extended far beyond them (e.g., Chernobyl, Fukushima, pandemics, droughts). Crises do not recognize national boundaries, nor do they stop at them. Increasingly, crises are defined within regional and transnational frameworks (Rene, 1987).

The global scope of disasters has become more pronounced: two world wars, new conflicts whose escalation may lead to global confrontations, worldwide economic repression, nuclear accidents, and current environmental trends all require a global perspective. Although sources of problems may remain local or national, the immediate or long-term consequences of disasters and crises spread across countries and continents. The majority of catastrophes and crises in recent decades clearly demonstrate the importance of this transnational dimension (McCormick, 2005).

The Media Society

A crisis entails the collapse of the symbolic framework that legitimized the order within which people previously achieved a sense of security. The elements of normal, secure life disappear, giving rise to a chaotic condition of what remains. Crises generate multiple levels of uncertainty, from the individual to the collective. At the personal level, affected individuals face undeniable cognitive information that circumstances are deteriorating (’t Hart et al., 1993). At the societal level, this cognitive conflict is reflected in the activities of numerous groups and organizations that adopt differing interpretations of the situation, offering competing claims regarding causes, responses, and future developments. These problems are also characteristic of the international level.

To a large extent, cognitive uncertainty may be reduced or intensified depending on the actions undertaken by those in power. Political authorities build their credibility on the outcomes of their actions in crisis situations. Proposed solutions to crises, which do not necessarily coincide with expert recommendations, must nevertheless reach those affected by disasters (Nye, 2000).

The media tend to intensively cover two categories of events. First, they focus on ominous perspectives and the real-time unfolding of mega-disasters involving large numbers of potential or actual victims and extensive physical damage, driven by the appeal of timely and provocative information that attracts public attention. Second, the media display particular interest in subjective crisis phenomena characterized by panic, collective stress, and irrational behavior, which may weaken the normative structure of society.

A specific aspect of media influence is represented by social networks. Although the ambivalent nature of media may raise questions about the formal classification of social networks as media, they function in essence as powerful media channels. From the perspective of information dissemination, their capacity is exceptional. In addition to their utility, they may also constitute a significant negative factor by contributing to the spread of misinformation, panic, and similar effects.

Technological Development

The rapid and accelerating development of information and communication technologies, satellite communications, artificial intelligence, and the internet has dramatically altered human perceptions of temporal and spatial constraints. This technological development affects both the causes and characteristics of crises. Technology has become so complex that users often do not understand how it functions, complicating the detection and correction of operational failures. Successful design of technological systems requires close coupling of components, which increases the likelihood of cascading failures (Nye, 2003). The development of inherently high-risk technologies also expands the potential scope of crises. Growing dependence on computer systems renders social and economic systems increasingly vulnerable, particularly to threats from hackers and cyberterrorists.

A new dimension of high-risk technologies draws attention to medical technologies and genetic manipulation. The consequences of such developments may only become apparent after several generations, yet their impact could be irreversible. This trend is further exacerbated by the growing gap between megascience and the knowledge or understanding of political decision-makers.

Technological superiority confers strategic advantage (Stojanović, 2009). The increasing importance and application of artificial intelligence open unprecedented possibilities for generating crises and influencing fundamental perceptions of reality among individuals, companies, and social groups. Robotization and attempts to assign human capabilities to machines introduce new dimensions of future crises.

Erosion of State Authority

In countries characterized by neoliberal systems, the role of the state has diminished over recent decades. Traditional prerogatives of public authorities in times of crisis have given way to less clear and less authoritative definitions of the tasks that public institutions should perform in preventing, preparing for, and managing crises. This political and administrative trend has significant implications for the causes, characteristics, and consequences of crises.

The declining role of public authorities is further compounded by austerity policies and restrictive behavior during crises. As a result of declining performance, significant budget overruns, and reduced public legitimacy, new governments in Western countries have adopted New Public Management as a guiding principle (Blumer, 1995). Since the benefits of crisis management activities are far more difficult to quantify than their costs, such activities tend to be underestimated, potentially leading to reduced funding for prevention and response capacities (Kešetović & Keković, 2008).

Changes in the Paradigm of International Law

International law increasingly functions as a mechanism enabling major powers to act globally without prior authorization for planned actions. Unilateral initiatives, accompanied by tacit consent or non-intervention, allow international actors to pursue their objectives without regard for established norms of international law. Under such conditions, the configuration of international relations changes subtly at the global level. The consequences of such actions are diverse and long-term, but in all cases they become a platform for the emergence of future crises. This mode of action generates insecurity among states, as uncertainty prevails regarding future developments. The areas affected are

numerous: social issues, energy, cyber security, food and water security, pandemics, and others.

Riskiness of the Global Environment

Contemporary societies, operationalized through state systems, exist within an insecure, dynamic, and rapidly changing environment. Formerly dominant local influences have diminished, while global influences have become decisive. This reality directs attention to the growing number of risks that undermine the security and safety of modern societies. Even minimal disturbances in one part of the world can have smaller or larger repercussions on communities elsewhere. As a result, the list of risks affecting societies continues to expand. Societal resilience to negative influences decreases, while vulnerability increases. The future is likely to bring even more risks that will affect the security of social communities.

3.4. Risk Society and Contemporary Crises

The past two centuries have been marked by intense progress and development in technological, economic, and demographic terms. Such progress has led many theorists and practitioners to question whether it is entirely positive, what its effects are, and whether it is sustainable. This skepticism is grounded in the observation that, alongside progress, dangers have increased and evolved, threatening the destruction of both humanity and the planet. The world has become sharply divided into subject (human beings) and object (nature, society, technology). Philosophical postulates emphasizing the unity of humans and nature have been neglected and have lost their relevance. Humanity has pursued complete domination and ruthless exploitation of nature, the environment, and other human beings, with aspirations extending even toward the universe.

Science itself has partly served as an instrument of rational instrumentalization. A particularly significant contribution has been made by the ideology of excessive consumption, which has reinforced indifference toward both nature and other people. Consequently, the only certainty is that the future is "more uncertain than ever before" (Beck, 1992).

This pattern of societal development reveals increasing vulnerability. The culmination of progress is not reflected solely in technological advancement – which drives many other processes – but also in consciousness and culture, as well as in economics and security. Certain advanced, neoliberal-oriented societies have contributed to the creation of a distinct idea of unifying the world into a global village through globalization. Globalization, as a process, is itself a product of technological progress. Grounded in capitalist economics, global awareness, a global social system, and a military order, globalization seeks to erase national characteristics and subordinate them to global interests (Stojanović, 2009).

On these foundations, Ulrich Beck introduced the concept of the "risk society," drawing attention to the consequences of progress and technological development, which generate cumulative dangers and risks whose scope cannot be predicted.

Risk society theory has opened conceptual space for understanding risk and has brought its social dimension into focus. It is evident that dangers and their consequences do not affect all members of society equally. Even in the relationship between individuals and authorities, disasters that clearly produce negative effects for citizens may represent merely an administrative disturbance for decision-makers until institutional consensus is reached regarding their nature. Although decision-making depends on numerous factors, the primary

object of the security system – the individual – inevitably bears the consequences of disasters.

This situation raises a fundamental question regarding the path out of the "age of uncertainty": whether it lies in the continuation of Enlightenment-based rationalist notions of progress, or in the construction of a society founded on a different paradigm – one that acknowledges the need for progress and improved quality of life while also recognizing the existence of limits within which such progress must occur.

4. CONCLUSION

The altered global security configuration following the disappearance of bipolar confrontation has failed to deliver the expected results, namely an increase in security and the creation of unhindered conditions for progress. On the contrary, ideas of social justice, a unified market, and a shared culture have remained positive concepts with tangible effects primarily in wealthy countries, while for poorer countries the range of problems has expanded. The gap between rich and poor has widened, population growth – especially in poorer regions – has intensified, the economies of many states have weakened, and rapid technological development, particularly in the fields of nuclear energy and information technologies, has increased the number of threats. In addition, shortages of food and energy resources, a rise in terrorist acts, and an increased frequency of natural and other disasters further exacerbate insecurity.

These problems are no longer merely local or confined to national states. The spatial and temporal dimensions of contemporary threats have become negligible, as none of these dangers depends on physical state borders; they threaten both rich and poor societies alike. The decisive difference lies solely in the existence of capacities for protection or for preventing negative effects. The consequences for people, material assets, and the environment are long-term in nature, affect a large number of actors, generate fear and panic, and disrupt the normal functioning of society.

These conditions indicate that contemporary society exists in a particular state of uncertainty and instability, commonly referred to as crisis. However, the scale of a crisis – and even the recognition of its existence – depend on those in power, specifically on their perception of an immediate threat to the fundamental values of society that requires an urgent response under conditions of uncertainty and insecurity, and often on political interests that determine whether an event is framed as a crisis.

Crisis events thus represent a serious challenge for governing authorities and a profound security problem for individuals and society. Citizens justifiably expect society to protect them and provide a secure environment in which they can fulfill their needs. Yet the very conditions that enable prosperity and progress simultaneously act as the main drivers of the causes of crises. As a result of the growing number of dangerous events, both individuals and societies as a whole become increasingly sensitive even to disturbances with lower threatening capacity.

The vicious circle in which progress and development act as drivers of crises, and in which crises may in turn generate progress while progress generates new crises, is a defining characteristic of contemporary society. Human security and the security of the surrounding environment remain uncertain. Contemporary aspirations toward universal security, largely shaped through globalization, reveal outcomes manifested in domination and, in particular, the monopolized exploitation of global natural resources by megacorporations (Kovač, 2009).

Mechanisms of global domination by powerful states are realized through the imposition of dependent modernization and neocolonialism, the reduction of state territorial sovereignty, cultural imperialism, the provocation of internal conflicts, and the use of military force to achieve political interests. For states seeking to preserve their national identity while existing within a just international community, the current trajectory of globalization represents an expanded range of challenges to national values.

The existing global constellation is evidently in crisis, and future developments will be shaped by the aspirations and power of major states (Kovač, 2009). The security dimension of the contemporary world has become increasingly influenced by modern crises. The spectrum of crisis impacts on societies in the contemporary world is multidimensional, thereby increasing societal vulnerability and exposing the weakest links within social systems.

Based on the presented analysis, it can be concluded that a causal relationship exists between social security and crises. An insecure and uncertain security context creates preconditions for the emergence of crises. Conversely, all types of events and phenomena with the capacity to generate crises constitute sources of security disruption. Future research should focus on further specifying causal relationships between social security and crises, with the aim of empirically demonstrating the influence of particular conditions and phenomena.

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POVERTY AS A NEGLECTED SECURITY CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE IN TODAY'S GLOBAL REALITY

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ABSTRACT

Poverty is not merely an economic condition but a multidimensional form of deprivation that undermines dignity, opportunity, and human security. While global narratives emphasize development, human rights, and progress, poverty remains a neglected driver of instability, fueling inequality, social unrest, crime, radicalization, and conflict. At the same time, wars, weak governance, corruption, and humanitarian crises deepen poverty and erode social resilience. This dynamic highlights poverty as both a *security cause* and a *security consequence*, yet one that is persistently overlooked in global policy discussions. The paper employs a qualitative analytical approach grounded in security studies, criminology, sociology, and international relations, with particular emphasis on criminological theory and structural explanations of insecurity. It integrates theoretical perspectives with empirical examples and draws on global statistics, academic literature, and thematic case studies. Special emphasis is placed on analysing how poverty interacts with violence, social inequality, organized crime, and armed conflict. Case studies of Syria, Yemen, Gaza, and Ukraine provide concrete illustrations of how contemporary wars generate extreme poverty, disrupt essential services, and intensify humanitarian suffering. Concepts from criminology –such as strain theory, social disorganization, and socioeconomic deprivation – are used to interpret the link between poverty and deviant or violent behaviour.

The findings indicate that poverty significantly increases exposure to violence, exploitation, human trafficking, juvenile delinquency, and recruitment by criminal or extremist groups. Impoverished communities face higher vulnerability due to limited access to education, healthcare, sanitation, and employment. Conflict-affected regions experience collapsing institutions, food insecurity, displacement, and generational cycles of deprivation. The evidence clearly shows that poverty and insecurity reinforce each other: poverty fuels instability, while instability accelerates poverty, creating a persistent global cycle that remains insufficiently addressed in policy frameworks.

Key words: poverty; human security; inequality; conflict; violence

1. INTRODUCTION

Poverty remains one of the most persistent and multidimensional challenges of the contemporary global system. Although international political discourse frequently highlights development, human rights, institutional reform, and economic progress, a significant portion of the world's population continues to experience severe deprivation that undermines their security, dignity, and the ability to live stable and productive lives. Far from being

merely an economic issue, poverty intersects directly with the core dimensions of human security, influencing access to food, healthcare, education, safe living conditions, and protection from violence and exploitation.

Despite decades of global initiatives aimed at eradicating extreme poverty, structural inequalities continue to widen. Entire communities remain trapped in cycles of deprivation caused by weak governance, corruption, social exclusion, armed conflict, and economic instability. Poverty is not only a condition shaped by a lack of material resources; it is also produced and perpetuated by political decisions, systemic failures, and deeply embedded global asymmetries. The result is a form of human insecurity that often receives insufficient policy attention, overshadowed by more traditional state-centric security concerns. In many contexts, poverty functions simultaneously as both a **security cause** and a **security consequence**.

On the one hand, poverty generates frustration, marginalization, inequality, and social tension – factors that contribute to crime, radicalization, civil unrest, and instability. On the other hand, armed conflicts, humanitarian crises, and violence destroy infrastructure, displace populations, disrupt education and healthcare systems, and deepen existing socioeconomic divides. This duality creates a self-reinforcing cycle: poverty breeds insecurity, and insecurity accelerates poverty.

Global conflicts in Syria, Yemen, Gaza, and Ukraine demonstrate how rapidly poverty can escalate when social structures collapse under violence. Beyond destroyed buildings, the invisible consequences – lost education, hunger, health crises, weakened institutions, and generational deprivation – are often far more severe and long-lasting. Recognizing these dynamics is essential for understanding why poverty must be treated as a major security concern rather than merely a development issue.

This paper examines poverty as a neglected security cause and consequence, analyzing its criminological, sociological, and geopolitical dimensions. Through theoretical frameworks and contemporary case studies, the aim is to highlight the urgent need for integrated security and development strategies that address the root causes of deprivation and promote long-term stability and resilience.

2. CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION OF POVERTY

Poverty is defined as the inability of individuals or households to secure sufficient resources to achieve a socially acceptable minimum standard of living. The characteristics that define poverty include individual, community, household, and regional dimensions. Lack of access to basic services such as housing, electricity, water supply, and sanitation significantly aggravates poverty, while socio-economic factors such as unemployment, level of education, gender, income, and household size directly influence the depth and persistence of deprivation.[14]

Poverty is a human-created phenomenon. As societies have generated vast amounts of wealth, they have simultaneously produced vast poverty. The causes of poverty in each country are deeply rooted in the global system, which for centuries has been structured to benefit the richest and most powerful – from colonialism to the present day.

[14] Ramphoma, S. (2014). *Understanding poverty: Causes, effects and characteristics*. Interim: Interdisciplinary Journal, p. 59.

2.1. Types of Poverty

There are several types of poverty, including situational poverty, generational poverty, absolute poverty, relative poverty, urban poverty, and rural poverty. Situational poverty is often the result of life shocks such as job loss, divorce, or severe health crises. Generational poverty refers to families that remain trapped in deprivation for more than two generations. Absolute poverty is defined as a complete lack of resources, including food insecurity, homelessness, and lack of access to healthcare. Relative poverty refers to living on approximately 50% or less of the average income. Urban poverty is characterized by overcrowding, housing insecurity, crime, and weak public services, while rural poverty is marked by isolation and limited access to education, healthcare, infrastructure, and technology.[2]

2.2. The Seriousness of Poverty as a Global Threat

As stated by Kofi Annan, *"Extreme poverty anywhere is a threat to human security everywhere."*

Poverty is not associated solely with income. Beyond the income dimension, it is necessary to consider other key areas related to people's everyday lives. Income alone does not guarantee prosperity, since poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon that includes health, education, and living standards.

It is important not to forget that behind every hungry person stands a series of political decisions or political failures. Nearly all hunger in the world is the result of corruption and poor governance in affected states. It is not a problem of capitalism or of greedy individuals accumulating food supplies; rather, it is a problem of dysfunctional government institutions and, above all, corruption.

Hunger is **man-made**; it is the result of deliberate decisions adopted by political leaders.

Hundreds of millions of people around the world suffer from hunger, and every year more than five million people die as a direct consequence of it – two-thirds of whom are children. All of this occurs in a world where food production is abundant. Failure to undertake everything possible to end hunger should be recognized as a **crime against humanity**.

The seriousness of poverty as a global phenomenon can be observed through several established facts:

- **689 million people** live in extreme poverty, surviving on less than 1.90 US dollars per day.
- Children and youth represent **two-thirds of the world's poor**, while women constitute the majority in most regions.
- Extreme poverty is increasingly concentrated in **Sub-Saharan Africa**, where approximately 40% of the population lives on less than 1.90 dollars per day.
- Rates of extreme poverty almost doubled in the **Middle East and North Africa** between 2015 and 2018, from 3.8% to 7.2%, primarily due to the crises in Syria and Yemen.
- Although fragile and conflict-affected states are home to about 10% of the world's population, they account for **over 40% of people living in extreme poverty**. By 2030, around 67% of the world's poor are expected to live in increasingly fragile conditions.
- About **70% of people aged over 15** who live in extreme poverty have no education or only primary education.

- **1.3 billion people** in 107 developing countries, representing 22% of the world's population, live in **multidimensional poverty**. Approximately 84.3% of the multidimensionally poor live in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.
- **644 million children** are affected by multidimensional poverty worldwide.[15]

These indicators clearly demonstrate that poverty is not merely a social or developmental issue but a **systemic global security threat** with far-reaching humanitarian, political, and economic consequences.

3. POVERTY AS A SECURITY CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE (A NEGLECTED DIMENSION)

Poverty simultaneously represents a **security cause and a security consequence**, and these two dimensions function in direct interdependence. With the existence of poverty, intolerance, anger, and frustration grow within society, manifesting in various forms. As a cause, poverty contributes to riots, protests, demonstrations, general crime, organized crime, juvenile delinquency, and related phenomena. At the same time, due to the persistence of poverty and the inability to establish effective control over these conditions, a wide range of consequences emerges: the spread of infectious diseases, uncontrolled reproduction leading to overpopulation, illiteracy due to limited access to education, prostitution as a means of survival, and human trafficking – especially child trafficking. [16] Poverty is frequently identified as a decisive **motivating factor for criminal behaviour**.

Individuals who lack basic means of subsistence are more likely to become involved in criminal activities when experiencing negative income shocks.

In an effort to escape hopeless living conditions, many individuals perceive participation in illegal activities as a means acquiring quick financial resources.

Juvenile delinquency is particularly prevalent among children and minors who grow up in families characterized by extreme hardship. Such children are more prone to vagrancy, begging, spatial segregation in ghettos, and social rejection.

Populations from the poorest social strata are simultaneously **perpetrators of criminal acts and victims of those acts**.

Many women become victims of human trafficking, with prostitution being the most common form, often used as a survival strategy in situations of economic desperation. The deterioration of living conditions frequently forces children to abandon education in order to contribute to family income, exposing them to serious risks of exploitation. Dysfunctional and weak states are characterized by social misery and hopelessness, accompanied by instability and violence. When combined with global poverty, excessive debt in the poorest countries, the spread of infectious diseases, and the fact that these conditions affect large segments of the world's population, it becomes clear why this tendency is considered a continuous source conflict and violence. [17] It should be noted that as poverty decreases, the incidence of violence also tends to decline. This dual role of poverty as both a cause and a consequence of insecurity provides the

[15] https://www.worldvision.org/sponsorship-news-stories/global-poverty-facts, accessed on 02.12.2025.
[16] Vankovska, B. (2011) *International Security – Critical Approach*, fourth part, Faculty of Philosophy, Skopje, p. 198.
[17] Vankovska, B. (2011) *International Security – Critical Approach*, fourth part, Faculty of Philosophy, Skopje, p. 198.

conceptual foundation for the following theoretical analysis, which examines how structural deprivation translates into criminal behavior, social instability, and broader security risks.

3.1. Extreme Poverty as a Hopeless Way of Life

Extreme poverty is often trivialized and viewed simply as a lack of food, income, adequate housing, or education. However, when one attempts to understand the lived experiences of people suffering under these conditions, other harsh realities emerge: direct violence against individuals combined with the denial of fundamental rights. Material deprivation traps individuals in a constant struggle for survival; insecurity can cause family disintegration; exploitation reaches such levels that individuals are deprived of any realistic opportunity to realize their potential; humiliation, exclusion, and contempt go so far that people living in extreme poverty are no longer perceived as full human beings.[18]

Poverty destroys our shared humanity. It creates barriers that hinder communication and understanding. A form of **dual violence** exists: first, forcing individuals to live in extreme poverty; and second, the misinterpretation of why they react in the ways they do.

The poor pay a much higher price than others during economic crises, yet they are rarely included in the design of strategies to overcome these crises. Despite all hardships, those who suffer from the violence of poverty defend themselves on a daily basis – sometimes through violent behavior – forced into constant competition for survival.[19] It is impossible to live in peace as long as the inhumane condition of extreme poverty continues to exist.

3.2. Social Inequality

Social inequality has always existed and will continue to exist. Throughout history, societies have been divided along the lines of estates, castes, and social classes. An entirely egalitarian society represents a utopian concept, as it would imply social stagnation. However, ensuring a minimum existential standard for those located at the very bottom of the social hierarchy is an essential imperative.

If all individuals had equal opportunities, social resentment toward unequal outcomes would be far less pronounced. However, when individuals are denied access even to those opportunities, the resulting anger becomes fully justified.

As Mahatma Gandhi observed, *no one is born poor; society makes people poor, and poverty represents the worst form of violence*.

[18] ATD Fourth World. (2012). *Extreme poverty is violence: Breaking the silence – Searching for peace*. Retrieved from https://www.atd-fourthworld.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2015/07/conclusions-engl-colloquium-FF-print.pdf

[19] Ibid.

4. WAR AS A FORM OF VIOLENCE THAT GENERATES POVERTY

Once a conflict breaks out, it affects the poor most severely: social welfare is depleted as goods and services are redirected toward military efforts; rural infrastructure is destroyed in contested territories; and justice and security retreat into urban areas and elite enclaves. Conflicts both **generate and deepen poverty**. First comes the exhaustion of the labor force and human capital, followed by the destruction of productive assets and financial capital, and finally the erosion of social capital based on trust and cooperation, upon which strong political and economic systems depend.[20]

War disrupts food systems by undermining food production, causing rapid inflation of food prices, and preventing people from earning income to purchase food. War destroys key infrastructure that supports everyday life, from water systems and energy facilities to hospitals.

War displaces people from their homes, removes children from classrooms, exacerbates gender inequality, and exposes civilians to extreme levels of violence. Some of these conflicts last for decades, others for only for several years. In all cases, the consequences are catastrophic.

Wars are inherently violent and destructive, yet the deliberate destruction of resources can sometimes cause even greater damage than bombs and bullets. Warring parties may loot the enemy's food supplies, deliberately destroying farms, livestock, and other civilian infrastructure. Conflict can cause severe food shortages and serious disruption of economic activity, threatening the livelihoods of entire populations.

Additionally, wars typically cause the displacement of vast numbers of people, cutting them off from their food reserves and means of subsistence. Refugees are often highly vulnerable to acute food insecurity as well as to disease. Alternatively, when people remain in their homes, surrounding armed forces may besiege villages, towns, or neighborhoods and deprive civilians of food, medicine, and other vital resources until surrender. Many conflict zones are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, yet increasingly one or both sides to a conflict may block relief operations from reaching starving populations or may even carry out attacks on humanitarian organizations.[21]

4.1. Conflicts and Their Impact

Today, the world is witnessing a large number of conflicts whose effects are felt directly or indirectly across regions.

The impact of the **Russian–Ukrainian conflict** has been felt across nearly the entire international system, due to sanctions imposed by the international community on Russia and Russia's retaliatory measures. Nevertheless, it is the civilian population that suffers the most severe consequences. There has been a noticeable rise in prices, reduced production, and disruption in the global export of wheat and corn. Rising inflation has led to increased prices of both food and energy. Developing countries are particularly affected by food insecurity, as they are heavily dependent on grain imports and are highly vulnerable to price increases.[22]

In **Yemen**, years of civil war and bombing campaigns led by Saudi Arabia have

[20] National Geographic Education. (2023). *Hunger and war*. Retrieved from https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/hunger-and-war/

[21] Ibid.

[22] McCarthy, J. (2022). *How war fuels poverty*. Global Citizen. Retrieved from https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/how-war-fuels-poverty/

created one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. More than **21 million people**, including **11 million children**, require urgent humanitarian assistance. Around **16.2 million people** struggle to obtain even the minimum amount of food necessary for survival. Public health crises ranging from the COVID-19 pandemic to cholera outbreaks have overwhelmed an already fragile healthcare system suffering from staff shortages and lack of resources. Humanitarian organizations are digging new wells to ensure that communities have access to water necessary for life.[23]

The **ten-year war in Syria** has left more than **350,000 people dead** and has generated **6.6 million refugees** and **6.4 million internally displaced persons**. For millions of children, formal education has become impossible or a deeply traumatic experience. Hundreds of schools have been bombed, while many others lack adequate sanitation, heating, ventilation, electricity, and sufficient teaching staff.[7]

5. THE CORRELATION BETWEEN VIOLENCE AND POVERTY THROUGH THE PRISM OF CRIMINOLOGY

According to **exogenous factors –** that is, influences originating from the social environment that contribute to the emergence of sociopathological and deviant behavior – **socio-economic crises, impoverishment, and extreme deprivation** are identified as key causes of such behavior.[24]

Criminology, through relevant **psychological and sociological theories**, seeks to explain how specific factors and social phenomena stimulate certain criminal conditions or criminal behaviour. Among the theories most significant for explaining the relationship between poverty and crime are the following:

5.1. Theory of maladjustment

According to the theory of maladjustment, criminal behavior is the result of an individual's **inability – or even impossibility – to adapt** to living conditions and to the social norms that prevail in society. As a consequence, the individual chooses means and methods for satisfying personal needs that are socially prohibited and that lead directly into criminal activity.[25]

This theory clearly reflects how poverty and social exclusion limit adaptive capacities and push individuals toward illegal survival strategies.

From an analytical perspective, the theory of maladjustment helps explain why poverty should be understood not merely as an economic condition but as a structural constraint that shapes behavioral choices. When individuals are continuously exposed to limited legitimate opportunities for achieving socially valued goals, maladjustment emerges as a rational response to blocked social mobility rather than as a purely personal failure. In such contexts, criminal or informal survival strategies become adaptive mechanisms within a system that systematically restricts access to education, employment, and social advancement, thereby linking persistent poverty to increased levels of crime and insecurity.[26]

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Arnaudovski, Lj. (2007). *Criminology*, Part III, 2-ri Avgust S–Štip, Skopje, p. 182.

[25] Arnaudovski, Lj. (2007). *Criminology*, Part III, 2-ri Avgust S–Štip, Skopje, p. 185.

[26] Merton, R. K. (1938). *Social Structure and Anomie*. *American Sociological Review, 3*(5), 672–682, pp. 678–680.

In contemporary societies, the relevance of maladjustment extends beyond individual criminal acts and becomes visible at the community and systemic levels. Prolonged exposure to poverty and social exclusion weakens trust in formal institutions and erodes the perceived legitimacy of legal norms, especially when lawful behavior consistently fails to deliver minimal social or economic security. Over time, this environment normalizes informal and illicit practices as acceptable means of survival, blurring the boundary between adaptation and deviance. As a result, maladjustment contributes not only to isolated criminal behavior but also to broader patterns of social instability that carry direct implications for internal security.

5.2. Frustration theory

Frustration represents a **psychological state** in which a person experiences deprivation in relation to the expectations and standards of the social environment in which they live. There is a strong tendency to explain certain types of crime through the mechanism of frustration.

For example, **thefts committed by the poor** are often interpreted as expressions of dissatisfaction, powerlessness, and the unbearable nature of the socio-economic position in which individuals find themselves. Persistent poverty produces chronic frustration, which lowers resistance to deviant behavior.[27]

From an analytical standpoint, frustration theory provides a useful framework for understanding how poverty transforms subjective perceptions into potential sources of insecurity. When individuals or groups experience a persistent gap between socially promoted aspirations and their actual capacity to fulfill them, frustration evolves from a temporary psychological reaction into a stable social condition. In such circumstances, crime and deviant behavior are not merely impulsive acts but may represent expressions of accumulated resentment and perceived injustice, particularly in environments where legal and institutional mechanisms fail to offer credible pathways for social advancement.[28]

In contemporary security contexts, chronic frustration rooted in poverty can escalate from individual deviance to collective instability. When large segments of the population share similar experiences of exclusion and blocked opportunities, frustration acquires a collective dimension that may facilitate social unrest, violent protest, or susceptibility to radical and criminal mobilization. This dynamic demonstrates that frustration linked to poverty should be viewed not only as a criminological concern but also as a broader security challenge, particularly in fragile societies where institutional trust is already weakened.

5.3. Theory of social disorganization

Social disorganization emerges when **the equilibrium of society is disrupted**. Harmonious processes that integrate different social forces in a functional sense become weakened or destroyed, resulting in the **breakdown of social groups**.[29]

In conditions of poverty, communities often suffer from weakened institutions, disrupted family structures, unemployment, migration, and social marginalization – factors that directly contribute to crime and violence.

From an analytical perspective, social disorganization theory explains how poverty undermines security not primarily through individual motivation but through the erosion of collective social control. When economic deprivation is combined with residential

[27] Arnaudovski, Lj. (2007). *Criminology*, Part III, 2-ri Avgust S–Štip, Skopje, p. 203.
[28] Gurr, T. R. (1970). *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 35–37.
[29] Arnaudovski, Lj. (2007). *Criminology*, Part III, 2-ri Avgust S–Štip, Skopje, p. 226.

instability, unemployment, and weak local institutions, communities lose their capacity to regulate behavior through informal norms, mutual trust, and shared expectations. Crime and violence thus become more likely not because of inherent criminal tendencies but because the social environment lacks the mechanisms necessary to sustain order and cohesion.[30]

In security terms, this perspective highlights an important shift from viewing crime as an individual pathology to understanding it as a community-level vulnerability. In socially disorganized and impoverished areas, the absence of stable networks and effective local governance creates spaces where criminal groups, gangs, or informal power structures can emerge as alternative sources of order. As a result, poverty-driven social disorganization contributes not only to higher crime rates but also to long-term instability that weakens state authority and complicates efforts to restore sustainable security.

5.4. Marxist perspective on criminality

From the **Marxist perspective on criminality**, a key conclusion may be emphasized, articulated by **Karl Marx**, who argued that *there is something profoundly wrong in a society in which the system's wealth grows while poverty does not decrease but instead increases, and in which crime grows much faster than the population itself*.[31] This viewpoint highlights the structural contradiction between economic accumulation and social deprivation. In such systems, crime becomes a **systemic product of inequality**, exploitation, and exclusion.

From an analytical standpoint, Marxist criminology interprets crime not as an abnormal deviation but as a predictable outcome of socio-economic structures characterized by class domination and unequal distribution of resources. Within this framework, poverty functions as a structurally produced condition that limits legitimate survival options for marginalized groups, while simultaneously shaping legal norms that tend to protect dominant economic interests. As a result, certain forms of criminal behavior emerge less as moral failures and more as responses to systemic exclusion and material deprivation embedded in capitalist social relations.[32]

When applied to contemporary security environments, this perspective underscores how poverty may increase both exposure to criminalization and vulnerability to selective enforcement. In unequal societies, economically marginalized populations are more likely to engage in informal or illicit survival practices, while also being more intensively policed and sanctioned. This dual process reinforces cycles of exclusion and insecurity, suggesting that crime linked to poverty cannot be effectively addressed without confronting the underlying socio-economic structures that reproduce inequality and social marginalization. Taken together, the examined theoretical perspectives demonstrate that the relationship between poverty and insecurity cannot be reduced to individual pathology or moral failure. Maladjustment highlights structural barriers to legitimate adaptation, frustration theory explains how deprivation transforms into resentment and mobilization, social disorganization reveals the erosion of collective control in impoverished communities, and the Marxist perspective situates crime within broader relations of inequality and power.

Viewed in combination, these approaches converge on a common conclusion: poverty operates as a multidimensional security risk by simultaneously shaping behavior, weakening social cohesion, and reproducing conditions of instability. This theoretical synthesis

[30] Sampson, R. J., & Groves, W. B. (1989). *Community structure and crime: Testing social-disorganization theory*. *American Journal of Sociology, 94*(4), 774–802, pp. 777–779.

[31] Arnaudovski, Lj. (2007). *Criminology*, Part III, 2-ri Avgust S–Štip, Skopje, p. 182.

[32] Beirne, P., & Quinney, R. (1982). *Marxism and Law*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 38–41.

reinforces the central argument of the paper that poverty should be addressed not only as a socio-economic challenge but also as a persistent and structurally embedded cause and consequence of contemporary insecurity.

6. THE POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN

The Poor People's Campaign, also known as the 1968 Poor People's March on Washington, was an initiative launched to achieve economic justice for poor people in the United States. It represented a continuation and expansion of the struggle for civil rights toward a broader fight for social and economic rights, and it marked an important turning point in the history of social movements in the United States.[33]

In 2017, the campaign was relaunched as the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival, with the aim of continuing the original mission under the moral and political inspiration of Martin Luther King Jr. One of its central critiques concerns the war economy and militarism: instead of waging a war on poverty, the system often wages a war on the poor, both domestically and internationally, while enormous resources are devoted to the military sector. The movement argues that profiting from permanent war is morally indefensible and fundamentally incompatible with the principles of democracy and human dignity.[34]

CONCLUSION

Material deprivation represents the most severe form of poverty and emerges as a direct consequence of long-term impoverishment. In contemporary society, poverty and extreme deprivation constitute some of the most widespread social phenomena, accompanied by profound human and civilizational regression. They undermine not only individual well-being but also social cohesion, institutional stability, and the overall quality of life. For a society that declares itself democratic, humane, and socially responsible, it is essential to establish **clear standards for monitoring and studying poverty**, rather than neglecting, concealing, or denying it. Systematic research, transparent public policies, and accountable governance are indispensable prerequisites for understanding the true scope and dynamics of poverty and for designing effective responses.

Despite the fact that poverty represents a threat to **every sphere of security**, it is still largely perceived as a phenomenon that only marginally contributes to violence or is weakly connected to security risks. As a result, insufficient attention is devoted to its thorough analysis and to the prevention of the complex causes that stem from it. This persists even though the consequences of poverty are highly visible in the form of crime, social instability, forced migration, and humanitarian crises. For these reasons, poverty continues to be treated as a **neglected security cause and consequence**.

There is a persistent hope that key international actors may contribute to meaningful change in this regard. However, in practice, responses are still largely dominated by various populist programs and short-term experiments conducted by governmental and non-governmental organizations. Instead of undertaking concrete structural measures and fair

[33] National Museum of African American History and Culture. (2023). *Historical materials on the Poor People's Campaign*. Smithsonian Institution. Retrieved from https://nmaahc.si.edu/

[34] Poor People's Campaign. (2023). *Poor People's Campaign: A national call for moral revival*. Retrieved from https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/

redistribution of resources, **quasi-humanitarianism** is often presented through media campaigns, photographs, and reports that may later receive prestigious awards and recognition, while the actual living conditions of the poor remain unchanged. At the same time, crime rates continue to grow rapidly, yet often invisibly within official narratives. The theoretical analysis presented in this paper further confirms that poverty cannot be adequately understood through narrow economic or individual-centered explanations.

By integrating criminological and critical perspectives, the study demonstrates how poverty operates as a structural condition that shapes behavior, weakens social cohesion, and amplifies insecurity at both community and societal levels. These theoretical insights reinforce the argument that policies focused exclusively on repression, control, or short-term social assistance are insufficient to address the deeper security implications of poverty.

The findings of this paper confirm that poverty is not merely a socio-economic issue but a **multidimensional security challenge** that requires integrated, long-term, and ethically grounded policy responses. Without addressing the structural roots of poverty, sustainable security, social justice, and global stability cannot be achieved.

Consequently, addressing poverty as a security challenge requires long-term, integrated approaches that confront structural inequality, restore institutional trust, and strengthen social resilience, rather than merely managing its visible symptoms.

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CAUSES AND SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF ASSASSINATIONS: THE ROLE OF CLOSE PROTECTION IN VIP PROTECTION

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ABSTRACT

It is known that close protection, as a segment of security, primarily has the obligation to provide protection and safety to very important persons who are exposed to major risks such as assassinations, terrorist attacks, kidnappings, etc. The persons endangered by assassins, in most cases, are heads of state, prime ministers, prosecutors, as well as individuals with high popularity, or so-called VIP persons. In Kosovo, as in most other countries, problems caused by criminal groups or certain individuals are under the scrutiny of the responsible security institutions, specifically the State Police.

Today, criminal activity is increasingly expanding, and this highlights the fact that threats against important persons are more evident compared to the past. Therefore, for the Kosovo Police, the protection of personalities, both domestic and international, must be considered the next major challenge. Although the protection of very important persons is not something new, today the need for cooperation between states is increasingly felt in order to find a more efficient security model related to the protection of VIPs.

Methods: In the preparation of this scientific research paper, we applied the following methods: comparative, statistical, analytical, and case studies conducted at different stages from 1999 to the present. Through these methods, we identified and addressed various aspects related to security, particularly the types of risks in relation to the security of very important persons, as well as the measures that should be taken by protection teams and state institutions to prevent those risks.

Keywords: Kosovo, police, causes of assassinations, personalities of very important persons (VIPs), characteristics of bodyguards.

1. INTRODUCTION

“To be a bodyguard means to live someone else’s life and to be ready to sacrifice your own.” (Berisha, 2019: 9).

The security of personalities depends largely on the efficiency of protective escorting, organization, formation, professional preparation, and motivation. The duties related to the protection of very important persons are carried out by several security bodies, each within its own authorizations and responsibilities, and through mutual cooperation between them.

According to the law in force in our country, the tasks related to the security of domestic and international personalities fall under the competence of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, specifically under the competence of the Kosovo Police. Within the latter, the unit for the protection of personalities is responsible for the safety of the persons under protection and for the security of domestic and international personalities.
The importance of protecting very important persons is shown by data indicating that, in the last century, nearly one hundred statesmen around the world, including in Kosovo, have lost their lives due to assassinations, while the number of attempted assassinations is significantly higher than the number actually carried out.

2. BODYGUARDING IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The history of guarding goes back to the origin of humankind. The basic survival and caring instincts present in every man and woman – to ward off all kinds of threats, dangers and onslaughts, as well as the innate feelings to protect – have been present with all mankind since the earlist times, More precisely, the principles of bodyguarding, to protect and to take care of others who cannot do it for themselves, have been with us since the time of Adam and Eve (Ras, 2012:8).

A brief look at a possible reconstruction of the "history of bodyguarding" will assist the reader in understanding more about this social phenomenon and will also enable him/her to identify trends or patterns regarding bodyguarding. A look into history helps put different pieces of information together so that a more coherent and holistic picture of bodyguarding can be obtained. This, hopefully, will lead to a better and more honest in-depth understanding of personal protection in contemporary society (Ras, 2005:11).

State (public) policing developed because of social needs amongst members of society who required protection. While individuals looked after themselves since ancient times, they later shifted this responsibility to others to act on their behalf. This led to the origin of official police organization and departments. The year 1829 is normally seen as the time when modern organized policing came to the fore. In this year, Sir Robert Peel started the Metropolitan Police in London, England. This protection included the safeguarding of life and property, the enforcement of the law, and the prevention, combating, and investigation of crime (Heerden, 1994:25-26).

Private security existed in Great Britain long before the public police came into existence in 1829 and was also introduced in North America by English settlers long before the era of Peel. The same can be said of bodyguarding. It has existed long before public policing was introduced. Individuals developed a need to be protected and to feel safe, and they later started to employ others to protect them – normally in exchange for a fee or some material benefits. However, sometimes bodyguarding was carried out for political or religious reason as well (Ras, 2012: 9).

Bodyguarding has ancient roots, with specialized protective units documented as early as the Hittite Empire, where the Mesedi served as the king's personal guards to prevent assassination and ensure his safety (Beckwith, 2009:1). In classical antiquity, the Roman Praetorian Guard functioned as the elite protectors of the emperor from 27 BCE, combining personal security with political influence within the Roman state. Medieval Europe continued this tradition; for example, the English Yeomen of the Guard, established under Henry VII, originally served as active royal bodyguards responsible for the monarch's safety before later transitioning to ceremonial roles (Hewerdine, 1998:10–12).

3. THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF CLOSE PROTECTION FORCES

Security work for important personalities, specifically bodyguards, has existed since the time of the ancient Romans. Throughout the centuries during which government dynasties ruled, leaders entrusted their personal security to specially selected soldiers who were completely loyal (Ras, 2012:8). Primarily, these were members of regular armies, but history also records hired soldiers who were specifically rewarded with gold and property for such services, provided they lived long enough to enjoy the rewards. Their duty was to prevent any attack against their patrons – even at times when the patrons were at the height of their power and controlled vast territories, such as the Mongols Kublai Khan and Genghis Khan.

The true predecessors of modern bodyguards are now considered to be the Japanese Samurai. The Samurai were divided into free men who worked under contract for an employer and those who were bound hereditarily to their patrons. The word *Samurai* itself means "to serve" or "to protect someone" (Karahasanovic, 2009:22).

From the 7th century BCE to the 5th century CE, the Praetorian Guard was responsible for protecting government officials and members of their families. This unit, known as the Praetorian Cohort, consisted of both infantry and cavalry and accompanied distinguished citizens of the Roman Empire and military leaders such as Caesar, Mark Antony, and Octavian. In Rome, as the king's laws strengthened his authority and altered the political role of the Senate, senators – like other wealthy individuals – employed a significant number of soldiers as personal bodyguards for their own protection.

The first ruler to establish organized police forces was Augustus Caesar. These forces were structured as guards, with the primary task of protecting against assassins and maintaining a certain level of security in Rome (Ahić, 2009:74).

4. MAIN CAUSES OF ASSASSINATIONS

Assassinations represent deliberate and targeted acts of political violence aimed at influential individuals in order to achieve political, ideological, or social objectives. According to Wilkinson (2006), assassinations frequently occur in contexts marked by political instability, weak state authority, and intense power struggles, where violence is perceived as a viable tool to influence political outcomes. Furthermore, deep social divisions such as ethnic conflict, economic inequality, and ideological polarization contribute significantly to the emergence of assassination attempts. When political leaders are viewed as symbols of oppression or injustice, accumulated social grievances may escalate into targeted violence. Wilkinson emphasizes that these factors, combined with security vulnerabilities, create favorable conditions for assassinations to occur (Wilkison, 2006: 54–58).

Political assassinations are acts of deliberate violence against high-profile public figures, usually carried out with the explicit intent of influencing political direction, public policy, or social order. These acts are not isolated eruptions of violence but are often embedded in broader social, political, and environmental contexts which shape both motivation and opportunity.

One major cause identified in scholarly literature is social conflict**.** Social conflict refers to inter-group tensions within a country, often resulting from ethnic, economic, or ideological divisions. As tensions escalate, frustration and hostility can translate into

extreme violence such as assassination attempts, particularly when segments of the population attribute social grievances to the leadership (Yammarino 2018: 457–475).
Throughout human history, very few states have been free from assassinations, or at least from attempts to carry out such acts against statesmen. Since ancient times, when the first human groups began to form and leadership positions emerged, there have always been individuals who, for various reasons, sought to replace the leader. As this type of crime continues to occur today – and in fact appears to be increasing – it is important to ask: "Why does this crime persist?"

Regardless of the high level of security maintained by some states, even the most developed countries are not immune to this dangerous form of criminal activity. In most cases, the perpetrators are citizens of the same state in which the act is committed, raising questions about the factors that motivate such behavior. Historical records also show instances in which assassinations were carried out by individuals from other communities or states.

In Kosovo, particularly in the post-war period from 1999 to the present, several cases of assassination have occurred. These cases appear to have been motivated by a variety of factors, including political, economic, psychological, and personal reasons (Shatri, 2002). Thus, certain individuals or groups have continued to use assassination as a tool to release their frustrations, achieve their objectives, or take revenge for harm experienced – whether that harm is real or perceived.

Protective escorting, which provides the physical security of VIPs, has advanced over time, offering greater protection to various individuals. However, it remains unproven that complete, one hundred percent security can be guaranteed to any personality. Advancements in intelligence services, extensive and professional training, and the use of more sophisticated weapons by protective escorts have forced assassins to modify their methodologies. In the modern era, perpetrators attempt to stay one step ahead of security institutions by employing new strategies to accomplish their missions.
To understand why assassinations occur, it is essential to identify the main causes behind such acts and to analyze in detail the factors that drive individuals or certain groups to carry them out (Dani, 2017). In addition to understanding the causes, knowledge of the operational methods used by assassins is equally important. Such knowledge is particularly critical for members of close protection units, who are responsible for safeguarding high-profile individuals.

Previous research on the causes of assassinations, conducted by both local and international scholars, has concluded that six main factors motivate perpetrators:

1. Political causes,
2. Economic causes,
3. Ideological causes,
4. Personal causes,
5. Psychological causes,
6. Contract killings.

The bodies responsible for national security, as well as those tasked with protecting high-profile individuals, despite identifying the motivating factors, cannot always prevent attacks against the persons under their protection. Over the years, and throughout modern history, almost every leader has lived with the awareness that they may be the target of an assassination attempt (Kosovo Police, 2022:2).
In attempts to kill high-profile individuals, assassins have employed nearly every possible method. While close protection services have continuously strengthened their measures to

confront these threats, they have also prompted assassins to develop new methods to bypass protective security (Šuperina, Moratić & Ahić, 2016:91–110).
After 1999, Kosovo was not immune to such incidents. Various high-profile individuals were targeted with sophisticated and modern weapons,

including handguns, long firearms, and different types of explosives, resulting in both injuries and fatalities. The assassinations carried out in Kosovo involved highly specialized methods, and the motives, as confirmed by the responsible institutions, indicate that the majority of these killings were politically, economically, or financially motivated (Berisha, 2019:46).

5. SKILLS, CHARACTERISTICS, AND KNOWLEDGE OF BODYGUARDS IN KOSOVO POLICE

The work of a bodyguard is extremely stressful and demanding; therefore, individuals performing personal protection duties must possess specialized skills and knowledge. In addition to fulfilling the tasks associated with providing security and meeting the protection needs of the person under their care, bodyguards must also consider the evaluations of their employer, the media, and the public. A bodyguard, along with the entire team responsible for the security of the protected person, practically lives the life of their employer and must be available 24 hours a day without interruption (Radenovic, 2003:11). Although the work is dynamic, a significant portion of time is spent waiting. Therefore, maintaining concentration throughout duty is essential, and tasks should not become routine. Routine and lapses in security create opportunities for those from whom VIPs are protected. Unfortunately, some prejudices persist, suggesting that a bodyguard must weigh 120 kg and be at least 2 meters tall in order to provide protection. However, the primary and most important "weapon" of a personal bodyguard is the mind. Effective performance requires proper perception, readiness, vigilance, analytical thinking, and memory. Close protection personnel must be highly motivated and emotionally stable, possess proper etiquette, communicate effectively, and act discreetly and reliably. A bodyguard cannot afford mistakes in their career, as every error could cost the life of the protected individual.

Therefore, it is necessary for bodyguards to continuously train and improve their skills and characteristics to meet these strict criteria. A bodyguard must be in good physical shape, possess sharp vision and hearing, and maintain a professional appearance. They must remain fully concentrated and focused on their duties regardless of fatigue, as bodyguards often work long shifts to ensure 24-hour protection of their clients throughout all daily activities.

Bodyguards must have the ability to recognize potential sources of danger and remain calm and fully focused under pressure. Considering that bodyguards frequently need to cooperate or coordinate protection with other security forces, such as local police or other private security personnel, they must also possess strong interpersonal communication skills. Training for bodyguards includes the use of firearms, hand-to-hand combat skills, tactical driving, and first aid (Berisha, 2013:17). In many bodyguard units, particularly those responsible for protecting heads of state, personnel undergo additional training for specialized duties, such as:

- Close protection of the VIP during movement on foot and in vehicles;
- Protection of the VIP when moving through crowds;

- Searching for explosive devices, understanding safety rules for handling explosives, knowledge of types of explosives, detonators, and general recognition of improvised explosive devices, as well as conducting vehicle and location checks for explosive threats (Lonsdale, 1995:187);
- Searching for surveillance equipment, recognizing electronic monitoring tools, detecting and neutralizing electronic surveillance devices, and following communication protocols (Druzeta, 2016:206);
- "Counter-sniper course": comprehensive knowledge of sniper rifles, handling of sniper weapons, identifying sniper positions, and techniques for counter-sniper operations;
- Organizing the protection of the VIP in hotel facilities, including tactics and techniques for ensuring safety within a hotel, from room selection to overall protection during the stay;
- Ethics and protocol: official introductions and handshakes during formal meetings, rules for official dinners, appropriate attire and appearance according to protocol, dining etiquette, arrangement of guests at the table, and understanding academic, noble, and diplomatic titles (Verbac, 2002:12).

6. DAILY PLAN OF VIP SECURITY TEAM AND DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The workday begins with a meeting led by the team leader responsible for protection. During this meeting, it is necessary to review the planned activities that the client intends to carry out throughout the day. The team leader must develop the protection plan and assign specific duties and responsibilities to each team member (KFOR – Multinational Specialized Unit, 2023:22).

It is also essential to review and develop movement plans for the VIP from their residence to the workplace. Throughout the day, the VIP may travel by car, train, or airplane, attend meetings in restaurants, or participate in public events. After drafting the plan, one or more bodyguards may visit the locations in advance to verify routes, identify roadworks, potential turns, closed paths, and other obstacles. Detailed inspections of the premises where the VIP will be staying are critical, including the security of the building and auxiliary entrances and exits (Moratic & Ahic, 2015:89).

Physical and technical security work for VIPs and facilities in Kosovo and worldwide is carried out by specialized units within the police and military. It is extremely important that the institutions responsible for VIP and facility security operate in close coordination with sectors such as state intelligence, counterintelligence, and counter-terrorist services, whether in the military or police, as a lack of coordination can represent the largest flaw in the VIP security system, potentially leading to fatal consequences.

For example, one of the tasks of the counterintelligence sector within the military and police is to detect any threats to VIP security and report them to the police. Based on this information, preventive measures are implemented, and VIP protection operates by increasing the security level and activating anti-terrorist units to prevent and neutralize threats.

The unit responsible for physical protection within the security service not only protects VIP personalities but also secures the facilities of highly important persons in various situations and for periods of time according to operational needs. Continuous

security is provided for the highest state leaders and the most important institutions of the system, such as the Assembly and the Government.

VIP security is organized using so-called concentric ring systems:

- The first ring consists of immediate and direct protection around the personality or facility. This ring is composed of the most trusted personnel, who are well-trained and highly specialized.
- The second ring of security covers a wider area and is somewhat broader than the first ring. It is usually a mixed system, composed of both police and military forces.
- The third ring is the most important concentric ring and is "invisible". It represents security in the broadest sense, as this is where intelligence for decision-making is concentrated and no mistakes are permitted.

Practice has shown that at least two levels exist in which special services operate to secure state officials. The first level is regular readiness, during which services, according to their daily plans, secure the most sensitive locations against potential attacks on state leaders. These sensitive points include their residences (houses and apartments), birthplaces, and the routes they travel from home to work. The second level is a special security readiness, activated when information exists regarding real threats to the lives of state leaders and their family members. This level involves the activation of counterintelligence and anti-terrorist sectors within the police, state security services, and the military, to provide full protection for threatened individuals. The first level of security includes personal escorts and the driver in the armored vehicle, whereas the second level establishes special conditions for the VIP's stay and work. Members of the service responsible for physical protection are required to stay up to date with the latest technical developments in communication equipment, surveillance countermeasures, and related areas. They must also train daily to perfect the skills necessary for their duties, including driving armored vehicles, close-quarters combat ("hand-to-hand"), combat skills adapted to bodyguard duties, and the use of various tools and weapons – from cold weapons to practical shooting with pistols and other automatic firearms (Berisha, 2019:83–84).

7. THE AMBUSH AND ITS RISK ELEMENTS

An ambush is a rapid, violent, and unexpected attack that is extremely difficult to avoid, as it is carefully planned in advance and therefore poses significant challenges to protective teams and escort operations in general. Ambushes are typically initiated from concealed or covered positions, making it difficult to detect the attackers beforehand. The primary objective of the attackers is to remain unnoticed in order to create favorable conditions for executing the attack.

Attackers deliberately select locations suitable for engaging a moving target or one that has temporarily stopped. Consequently, the choice of position is critical, as all actions are conducted from this location. This area is commonly referred to as the *kill zone* (Zone "X"), defined as the area selected by attackers to maximize the concentration of force and the effectiveness of striking the target (Office of Protection Operations, 2015:34).

7.1. Main Elements of an Ambush

Planning: As with any operation requiring careful preparation, attackers initially focus on planning the operation aimed at targeting a VIP. This planning is carried out well in advance, after which the attackers wait for a favorable opportunity to execute their mission.

Positioning: Following detailed planning and analysis, attackers determine the optimal location from which to execute the attack. They carefully select a site that allows them to act without being detected, without obstruction, and without facing a counterattack from the VIP's close protection team or other security personnel.

Initiation: This phase involves the final field preparations after positioning. During this stage, attackers occupy their positions and assess from which direction the attack should be launched and which target will have the highest priority. In some cases, attackers initially target vehicle drivers in order to stop the escort convoy in advance and subsequently strike the main VIP target.

Confirmation: After analyzing the first three elements – planning, positioning, and initiation – the attackers assess whether the necessary conditions for carrying out the attack have been met. Practical experience has shown that in certain situations, when attackers conclude that the required conditions for a successful operation are not present, they withdraw before reaching the final phase of the ambush. This withdrawal occurs prior to the execution of the concrete operational act (Kosovo Police, Lesson No. 3, 2015:10).

Action: Action represents the final element of the ambush and occurs once the attackers are convinced that the conditions are favorable and that the assault must be executed. Attackers are often characterized by a high degree of emotional control and are prepared to wait for extended periods to complete their mission. However, empirical evidence indicates that prolonged waiting frequently increases stress levels and psychological pressure, which can ultimately lead to operational failure. Therefore, the effectiveness of an assassination is not determined by a fixed time frame. Nevertheless, operational advantage is generally achieved when the VIP's movement is slow or temporarily stationary, when protective coverage is inadequate, and when precise timing is applied in approaching the target. The combination of these factors significantly increases the likelihood of a successful attack.

In addition to the main elements of an ambush, there are also general elements of attacks against VIPs that pose serious threats to public officials, institutions, and other protected persons. These general elements include:

- Preliminary planning**:** Observation and analysis of the target's routines and movement patterns.
- Selection of timing**:** Exploitation of predictable situations, without reference to operational specifics.
- Element of surprise: Intention to catch the target unprepared and reduce reaction time.
- Security vulnerabilities: Insufficient protection measures or lack of coordination among security personnel.
- Environmental factors: Physical spaces that restrict movement, reaction, or escape.

- Disinformation: The use of distraction or the deliberate creation of confusion to facilitate the attack.

7.2. Planning the Attack Objectives

The planning of attack objectives represents a fundamental stage in deliberate criminal or terrorist actions. According to Clarke and Cornish, offenders engage in rational decision-making processes in which they define objectives, assess risks, select targets, and choose appropriate methods in order to maximize effectiveness and minimize exposure (Clarke & Cornish, 2001:23–24).

This planning phase typically includes intelligence gathering, weapon selection, identification of vulnerable locations, and preparation of escape routes. Understanding these processes is essential for security and close protection professionals, as it enables them to anticipate potential threats and implement proactive countermeasures aimed at disrupting planned attacks.

As noted earlier, attacks are rarely executed hastily or randomly. Instead, attackers generally rely on carefully developed and, in many cases, highly sophisticated tactics to achieve their objectives. Among the oldest and most effective of these tactics is the ambush, which has historically remained a persistent and serious concern for protective teams.

In this context, the primary purpose of planning and clearly defining attack objectives is to:

- Capture/Kill/Harass, etc.;
- Gather information about the targeted person;
- Determine the “kill zone”;
- Determine the weapons to be used;
- Select the individuals who will carry out the attack, while others handle security, support, etc.;
- Plan the methods and escape routes.

Given the high level of risk faced by persons of special importance, which may be further exacerbated by the deliberate planning of potential attackers, it is imperative that operators responsible for VIP security maintain heightened vigilance. In addition, the coordinated engagement of all relevant security mechanisms, including intelligence services, is crucial for the prevention of both the planning and execution of attacks by various criminal entities (Kosovo Police, Lesson #4, 2022:11).

8. CONCLUSION

Securing domestic and international personalities is a process that requires great attention and a high level of professional preparation. When it comes to protecting personalities, the level of risk must first be considered so that measures can be taken according to the risk level. Protection of very important persons is carried out by protective operators who must possess high intelligence and advanced training. Planning and protection are the two most important aspects of the protective team. The protective team, which forms the close circle around the protected person, must know the personality's exact schedule. During escorting, the team must continuously observe the surroundings, be aware of the public near the VIP, and plan their activities based on this information.

Practical experience has shown that the most effective protection occurs when intelligence services have sufficient information about the location the VIP will visit or regarding any potential threats. The information possessed by the intelligence team must be given to the person responsible for the protective team so that it can be used to implement the operational plan, such as changing the personality's scheduled agenda or canceling all meetings if it is verified that the risk may be unavoidable.

It must always be kept in mind that during escorting, without timely and accurate information, the security and protection of the personality are significantly jeopardized. Experience has shown that when the protective team does not have information regarding a potential threat, risk elimination depends entirely on the professional preparation of the team's operators. In these cases, vigilance is paramount, as the operators must be fully aware that their eyes must detect anything suspicious around them and the person under protection. It must always be taken into consideration that 100% or absolute security has not yet been provided by any close protection system. However, since the protective team is primarily responsible for the lives of VIPs, they are legally obliged to take all measures to ensure the persons under protection are provided with security according to the law and existing regulations.

Since the duties and responsibilities of close protection operators are specific and carry great weight, two factors that can make their work more effective are: cooperation with all intelligence services and having timely information, as well as their special and continuous training with the full arsenal they possess according to their tasks and responsibilities.

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CONTEMPORARY CRIMINALISTIC METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

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ABSTRACT

Criminalistic science, as an integral part of the trichotomous science of criminalistics – alongside criminalistic tactics and methodology – constitutes a distinct field. It addresses the scientific and technical aspects of discovering, processing and interpreting material traces. In addition, it encompases techniques for registering and identifying persons and objects. The purpose of applying these methods and techniques is to prevent crime, detect criminal acts and perpetrators, as well as provide evidence.

Beyond traditional approaches, numerous modern methods have been introduced in recent years as a result of technological development. The paper examines contemporary criminalistic methods and techniques that significantly contribute to the efficient detection and proof of criminal acts, as well as the determination of erpetrators' identities.

Keywords: Criminalistic technique, methods, techniques, etc.

INTRODUCTION

Criminalistic technique, as a separate area of criminalistics, first emerged from the need to analyze crime scenes, determine perpetrators' identity, collect material evidence and undertake other measures to fully elucidate crimes. Methods applied within criminalistic technique may derive from the natural and technical sciences, as well as from the social sciences.

Methods in criminalistic science are scientifically based ways of understanding, researching and addressing objects of criminalistic knowledge. (Малиш Саздовска, 2025, стр. 13)

Today, numerous modern methods can be applied within the field of criminalistic technique, such as the use of drones during crime scene inspections, electronic crime scene sketching, pupil dilation analysis as a preliminary examination, blood alcohol analysis without blood sampling, and others.

USE OF DRONES

Drones have recently become a valuable technical and technological tool in police work, intelligence, and even in combat operations with the formation of special squadrons.

In the Republic of North Macedonia, drones are used to detect and extinguish fires, as well as in large-scale police operations – for example. searching for criminals or

identifying individuals who set forest fires. Internationally, drones are also used for forensic purposes: in the United Kingdom for monitoring crime scenes, in France for better inspection of major traffic accidents, and for investigating and surveilling locations of mass public gatherings, etc. (Sokoloski, 2024).

According to the 2022 Annual Report of the Committee for the Investigation of Air Accidents and Serious Incidents drones have a wide range of applications, including traffic monitoring, rescue operations in difficult-to-reach areas, agricultural use and the transport of material goods. Despite their extensive potential for application, regulatory gaps remain the primary challenge. The Republic of North Macedonia is at an early stage of regulating this field and the existing vacuum hinders the full development and application of the opportunity arising from drone technology. It is evident that this area will develop rapidly, making the immediate implementation of European and international regulations essential to avoid technological and operative limitations. In line with the Committee's needs, training was provided to two external investigators in drone operation and field recording during on-site inspection of air accidents. (Annual report on Work for 2022, 2022)

Based on the Annual Report of the Committee for the Investigation of Aircraft Accidents and Serious Incidents, it can be concluded that the use of drones in investigating such accidents and incidents is of substantial importance and that measures should be taken as soon as possible to enable drone application in the country. (Annual report on Work for 2023, 2023)

As noted in the digital forensics section, the Department of Forensic Examinations also analyzes electronic evidence stored in mobile devices and drones, with the aim of identifying evidence relevant to criminal investigations.

ELECTRONIC CRIME SCENE SKETCHING

Various software solutions allow crime scene technicians to create electronic sketches of crime scenes instead of relying solely on manually sketching.

Computer-Aided Design (CAD) systems can be used in combination with Rolleimetric MR-2 camera to produce high-quality electronic crime scene sketches. The new photogrammetric system includes lightweight cameras and computer equipment for processing image data. Its application in forensic science is not new. Among the available CAD systems for photographic measurement, the Rolleimetric MR-2 offers several advantages that make it suitable for routine use in serious crime scene documentation.

The Rolleiflex 3003 camera operates like like a standard camera, with the additional requirement that clearly visible reference targets (e.g. white discs or other markers) with known distances between them be present in the image. These reference measurements are recorded photographically alongside all other scene details. Photographers should be taken from multiple angles to ensure overlapping image data and optimal results – the more pictures are taken, the better! The final scaled sketch is produced through computer-based evaluation using system software and additional CAD tools, resulting in precise and clean representation of the crime scene. The system is also useful for documenting large-scale disaster scenes, including aerial mapping of objects separated by significant distances, such as aircraft crash sites. (Pfefferli, 2001)

Other software solutions, such as SmartDraw, also facilitate crime scene sketching and forensic diagram creation. Users can choose from predefine layouts for residential, commercial or outdoor scenes. These can then be customizes using symbols representing weapons, gloves, bloodstains, and even bodies. (SmartDraw, n.d.)

POLILIGHT

Polilight is a modern criminalistic tool that uses a laser-based method to detect fingerprints.

The Polylight is a mobile device designed to detect and photograph papillary ridge traces using light of different wavelengths. In addition to fingerprints, the device can also detect other biological traces that fluoresce under specific conditions.

The device is mounted on a pedestal and photography is performed at a right angle while the device is connected to a computer. This allows for the necessary adjustment of light and other parameters. Polilight enables high-quality and efficient forensic examination of crime scenes and is equipped with features such as remote control, a graphic display, and a five-meter light guide.

The extended light guide and the remote control allow the forensic technicians to move freely around the crime scenewithout constantly repositioning the device. (Бјеловук, 2022, p. 302)

ALCOHOL BREATH TEST

The alcohol breath test has been accepted as evidence in Sweden since 1989 and holds the same legal value as a blood test. Evidence instruments may be fixed or mobile and are used in buses, cars, boats and helicopters.

Sweden applies two categories of penalties for drunk driving: one based on breath tests and one on blood tests. Breath alcohol concentration is measured in milligrams of alcohol per liter of exhaled air (mg/l). Blood alcohol concentration is measured in parts per mille (‰). The offence is classified into two levels: drunk driving and aggravated drunk driving. Criminal liability for drunk driving begins at 0.10 mg/l of breath alcohol or 0.2 ‰ blood alcohol. Aggravated drunk driving is defined at 0.50 mg/l breath alcohol or 1.0 ‰ blood alcohol.

In practice, this means that breath tests often result in lower thresholds for establishing criminal liability compared to blood tests.

Sampling procedure: The first step in a roadside sobriety test is for the driver to blow into a hand-held test instrument, which gives a result if the alcohol content in the exhaled air is above the permitted limit. The result is only reported as “positive” and “negative”. Screening may be carried out without prior suspicion of an offence. If the screening test is positive, the next step requires the individual to undergo a confirmatory breath test using an evidentiary instrument. The driver must provide two breath samples at intervals of 6 to 9 minutes. If a person refuses or is unable to provide a breath sample – such as individuals with asthma or severe intoxication – a blood sample is taken instead. The Evidenzer evidentiaty instrument (used by Swedish police) employs infrared (IR) technology and measures ethanol content at four different IR wavelengths to differentiate it from other substances as effectively as possible. (Polisen.se, n.d.) This method is particularly useful in cases where individuals refuse to give blood sample.

HAIR DRUG TESTING

Drugs are stored in hair and can therefore be detected over much longer periods than in urine or blood. Therefore, hair analysis can provide valuable information about previous intake of substances – from weeks to months into the past time.

When a person takes drugs, they circulate the bloodstream, reaching the capillaries of the hair follicles. The substance is embedded in the growing hair shaft and as the hair grows, it forms a chronological record of substance intake. This means that hair analysis can show when a person last used drugs. On average, hair grows approximately one centimeter per month, although this can vary from person to person. In cases involving suspected overdose death, hair analysis can provide information about whether the person had periods of abstinence prior to death. In recent years, advanced hair analysis techniques have also been used as supplementary evidence in cases of involuntarily drug administration.

These analyses are performed in a forensic chemistry laboratories, which also provide specialized hair sampling kits. (RMV.se, n.d.)

CONCLUSION

Ciminalistic science and criminalistic-technical examinations play a crucial role in criminal investigation procedures. These methods and techniques are essential for collecting relevant material traces that serve as high-quality evidence during judicial proceedings.

Forensic methods and techniques are applied to answer the so-calle “nine golden questions” of criminalistics, thereby completely clarifying criminal offences. Through these methods, cause-and-effect relationships at the crime scene are established and perpetrators are identified. At the same time, all necessary facts indicating motive, modus operandi, victims and other aspects of the crime are thoroughly examined.

By combiing traditional and modern forensic-technical methods and techniques, conditions are created for a high-quality and efficient criminal investigation, ultimately contributing to the imposition of appropriate sanctioniong for perpetrators by prosecutors and courts.

In the future, it is essential for the forensic-technical personnel in the Republic of North Macedonia to acquire advanced knowledge and practical skills related to applying these modern criminalistic methods and techniques. This will ensure their successful implementation in both fieldwork and laboratory examinations.

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STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS USING SPSS

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Abstract

This paper presents an integrated statistical analysis of road traffic accidents through a methodologically structured approach using SPSS. The research encompasses three key dimensions of analysis: the effect of wearing seat belts on the number of fatalities, a comparison between current figures and historical averages, and the identification of autocorrelations within time-series data related to traffic accidents. By applying correlation and regression analysis, *t*-tests, and time-series analytical techniques, the study yields significant findings that confirm the interrelation among the examined variables and highlight their influence on safety indicators. The results underscore the importance of quantitative analysis in the effective formulation of evidence-based measures aimed at improving road safety.

Keywords: Analysis, SPSS, statistical methods, traffic accidents, road safety

1. INTRODUCTION

Statistical methods are essential in the scientific investigation of traffic safety, as they enable the identification of underlying patterns in the occurrence of traffic accidents and support the formulation of effective measures for their reduction. Due to their frequency, traffic accidents and conflicts are particularly well suited for statistical analysis (Pešić et al, 2019). The application of statistical techniques provides a detailed understanding of the scope of the problem, the spatial and temporal distribution of accidents, their categorization, as well as the contributing factors that lead to their occurrence (Lord and Mannering, 2010).

In general, statistical methods are classified into two main categories: descriptive statistics, which summarize and present collected data using tables and graphs (e.g., mean,

median, standard deviation, 85th percentile, etc.) and inferential statistics, which are aimed at parameter estimation and the testing of statistical hypotheses (Molugram and Rao, 2017).

2. METHODOLOGY

As part of the statistical examination of road traffic accidents, three research hypotheses were developed and empirically tested to validate specific assumptions:

- A statistically significant relationship exists between front-seat seat belt usage rates in passenger vehicles and the fatality count among front-seat occupants;
- A statistically significant difference will be observed between the 2022 figures for fatalities, seriously injured persons (SIP), and minimally injured persons (MIP), and the corresponding average values recorded over the previous decade;
- The presence of autocorrelation in the residuals derived from regression analysis concerning traffic accidents frequency.

The statistical analysis of road traffic accidents was conducted using the following statistical methods:

- Correlation and regression analysis,
- Mean value testing, and
- Autocorrelation and partial autocorrelation analysis, including forecasting techniques.

The variables used in this study were categorized as dependent and independent. Fatalities among front-seat passengers in passenger vehicles served as dependent variable, while the proportion of seat belt use in the respective seats was the independent variable. The analysis also includes core road safety outcomes – namely accident counts, fatalities and injuries – which were further disaggregated by severity. From another perspective, indirect indicators included seat belt usage, determined through field research on a representative sample.

In the context of correlation and regression analysis, correlation indicates the intensity of the relationship between the variables under study (Amortila et al, 2021). In other words, it shows the extent to which variations in one variable correspond to variations in another. Accordingly, both simple and multiple correlations are considered, and distinctions are made between linear and nonlinear correlations.

The intensity of a linear association between variables is commonly measured using the Pearson correlation coefficient. Its value ranges between –1, indicating a perfect negative correlation, and 1, indicating a perfect positive correlation between the studied variables, (Washington, 2010). The coefficient of determination indicates the proportion of variation in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variable. When a dependency is observed between variables, the question arises as to the nature and form of that dependency and whether it can be mathematically modeled (Molugram and Rao, 2017). In such cases, regression analysis is applied, which, like correlation analysis, may take linear or nonlinear forms. Statistical modeling involves fitting a statistical model to data. When a model is used for prediction, it is important that it fits well across the entire range of each variable (Hauer, 2015).

The data used in the analysis concerning the number of traffic accidents and their consequences were obtained from the database of the Macedonian Statistical Office (total number of traffic accidents from 2002 to 2022: 75,810; number of traffic accidents in 2022:

3,951; total number of fatalities from 2002 to 2022: 3,110; total number of persons with serious injuries (SIP) from 2002 to 2022: 18,113; and total number of persons with minor injuries (MIP): 103,388). Due to the unavailability of domestic data on indirect indicators related to seatbelt usage, data from the Serbian road safety database (number of front-seat fatalities from 2016 to 2022 and the percentage of front-seat seat belt usage for front seats during the same period) were used to validate the specified assumption.
The statistical analysis employed the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software, which enables the application of various statistical techniques for data processing (Landau and Everitt, 2004).

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the collective risk analysis of road traffic accidents on express roads, by road section and by year, are presented in Table 5.

2.1. Correlation and Regression Analysis

The outcomes of the linear correlation analysis between the number of fatalities among front-seat occupants in passenger vehicles and the front-seat belt usage are presented in the following tables.

Table 1. Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation of the Variables

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Fatalities in Front Seats	46.71	12.606	7
Percentage of Seat Belt Usage in Front Seats	81.7286	4.24959	7

Table 2. Pearson Correlation Coefficient

		Fatalities in Front Seats	Front-seat belt usage
Fatalities in Front Seats	Pearson Correlation	1	-.873)*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.010
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	953.429	-280.743)
	Covariance	158.905	-46.790)
	N	7	7
Front-seat belt usage	Pearson Correlation	-.873)*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	-280.743)	108.354
	Covariance	-46.790)	18.059
	N	7	7
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

The results demonstrate that the Pearson correlation coefficient is – 0.873 ($r < –0.75$), indicating a strong negative linear correlation between front-seat belt usage and the number of fatalities in front seats of passenger vehicles.

The significance level is 0.01 ($p < 0.05$), confirming a statistically significant linear association.

The outcomes of the regression analysis concerning the number of fatalities in front seats of passenger vehicles and the percentage of seat belt usage in those seats are presented below.

Table 3. Model Summary Data[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.873a	.763	.716	6.724

a. Predictors: (Constant), Percentage of Seat Belt Usage in Front Seats
b. Dependent Variable: Fatalities in Front Seats

Table 4. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	727.397	1	727.397	16.091	.010b
	Residual	226.032	5	45.206		
	Total	953.429	6			

a. Dependent Variable: Fatalities in Front Seats
b. Predictors: (Constant), Percentage of Seat Belt Usage in Front Seats

Table 5. Model Parameters[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	258.471	52.851		4.891	.005	122.613	394.329
	Percentage of Seat Belt Usage in Front Seats	-2.591)	.646	-.873)	-4.011)	.010	-4.251)	-.931)

Dependent Variable: Fatalities in Front Seats

The coefficient of determination is 0.763; however, given the small sample size, the adjusted coefficient of determination is more appropriate. Its value is 0.716, indicating that 71.6% of the variance in the number of front-seat fatalities in passenger vehicles is explained by front-set seat belt usage. The results of the Student's *t*-test and the associated p-values ($p < 0.05$), with a confidence level of 95%, support the conclusion that the regression model is statistically valid. These findings suggest that the front-seat belt usage has a substantial effect on reducing the fatalities among front-seat occupants.

2.2. Mean Value Testing

To examine the outcomes resulting from traffic accidents over the past ten years, the study tested the recorded number of fatalities, seriously injured persons (SIP), and minimally injured persons (MIP) in 2022. The results of the T–test focused on traffic-related fatalities recorded in 2022 are presented below.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics on the Recorded Fatalities in the Past 10 Years

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Number of Fatalities	10	142.60	24.677	7.803

Table 7. T-Test Results for the Recorded Fatalities in 2022

	Test Value = 124					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Number of Fatalities	2.384	9	.041	18.600	.95	36.25

According to the T-test, with 9 degrees of freedom and a significance threshold of $p = 0.05$, the calculated t-value is 2.384, and the p-value is 0.041. This indicates that the 2022 fatality figures differ significantly from the average over the previous ten years. Accordingly, the findings suggest that, with respect to fatalities, the situation in 2022 is more favorable compared to the past decade.

The results of the T-test applied to evaluate the incidence of serious injuries caused by road traffic accidents in 2022 are presented below.

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics on the Number of Seriously Injured Persons in the Past 10 Years

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Number of SIP	10	837.00	44.875	14.191

Table 9. Test Results for the Number of Seriously Injured Persons in 2022

	Test Value = 820					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Number of SIP	1.198	9	.262	17.000	-15.10)	49.10

According to the results of the T-test, with 9 degrees of freedom and a significance threshold of 0.05, a t-value of 1.198 was obtained, along with a significance level of 0.262. From a statistical point of view, the 2022 figures on serious injuries do not exhibit significant deviations from the average number of seriously injured persons over the past ten years. This leads to the conclusion that the situation in 2022 concerning seriously injured persons in traffic accidents is less favorable compared to the previous 10-year period.

The results of the T-test used to evaluate incidence of individuals with minor injuries resulting from traffic accidents in 2022 are presented below.

Table 10. Descriptive Statistics on the Number of Minimally Injured Persons in the Past 10 Years

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Number of MIP	10	5102.20	447.030	141.363

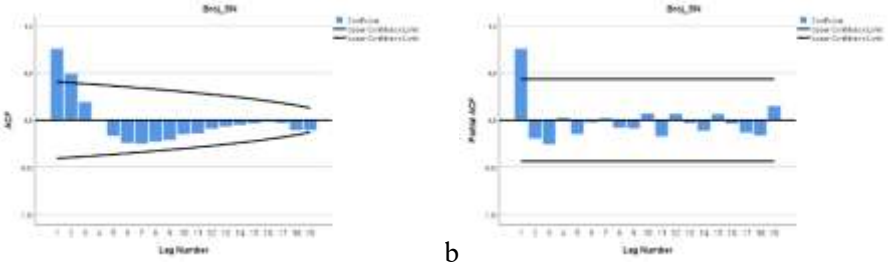
Table 11. T – Test Results for the Number of Minimally Injured Persons in 2022

	Test Value = 4500					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Number of MIP	4.260	9	.002	602.200	282.41	921.99

According to the results of this test and the significance threshold, a t-value of 4.260 was obtained, along with a significance level of 0.002. From a statistical standpoint, it can be determined that that the 2022 figures concerning individuals with minor injuries (MIP) differ significantly from the average number recorded over the past ten years. Furthermore, it can be concluded that the situation in 2022 concerning individuals with minor injuries resulting from traffic accidents is more favorable compared to the previous ten-year period.

2.3. Autocorrelation Analysis and Forecasting

In the autocorrelation and partial autocorrelation analysis, the assumption of independence among residual values in the time series data was tested. For this analysis and for forecasting the total count of traffic accidents, data from 2002 to 2022 were used. The results of the autocorrelation and partial autocorrelation analysis are presented below.



a b

Fig. 1. (a) Autocorrelation plot; (b) Partial autocorrelation plot.

ccording to the results obtained from the autocorrelation analysis, the significance level for all periods ranges from 0 to 0.012, indicating that the data is statistically significant across all periods. Therefore, it can be inferred that the traffic accident data for the observed period are suitable for predictive modeling. From the autocorrelation plot and partial autocorrelation plot, it is evident that the autocorrelation values indicate the presence of a trend in the observed values.

The Durbin–Watson d-test is commonly used to identify autocorrelation in the residuals of a regression model, (Gošić et al, 2022). The result of the Durbin–Watson test is $d = 0.257$. Since $d < 2$, it can be concluded that positive autocorrelation is present.

To determine the most suitable forecasting model based on the Exponential Smoothing method, a summary of results was prepared, including RMSE (Root Mean Squared Error), MAPE (Mean Absolute Percentage Error), MAE (Mean Absolute Error), and R^2 (Coefficient of Determination), as shown in Table 12.

Table 12. Model Selection Data for Forecasting

Exponential smoothing model type	RMSE	MAPE	MAE	R2
Holt	360.257	7.713	277.104	0.825
Brown	367.833	8.979	310.882	0.808
Dumped Trend	356.182	7.600	269.143	0.838

The model with the lowest values for RMSE, MARE, and MAE, and the highest value for R^2, is considered the most suitable for predicting traffic accident counts. Based on the comparison of values presented in Table 12, it can be concluded that the most appropriate forecasting model using the Exponential Smoothing method is the Damped Trend model.

The results of the forecasted traffic accident counts using the Exponential Smoothing method with the Damped Trend model are presented in the following tables and figures.

Table 13. Forecast of the Traffic Accident Counts through 2030

Model		2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
No_SN-Model_1	Forecast	3979	4004	4026	4046	4064	4079	4093	4106
	UCL	4727	5171	5582	5978	6365	6745	7117	7482
	LCL	3231	2837	2471	2114	1762	1414	1070	730

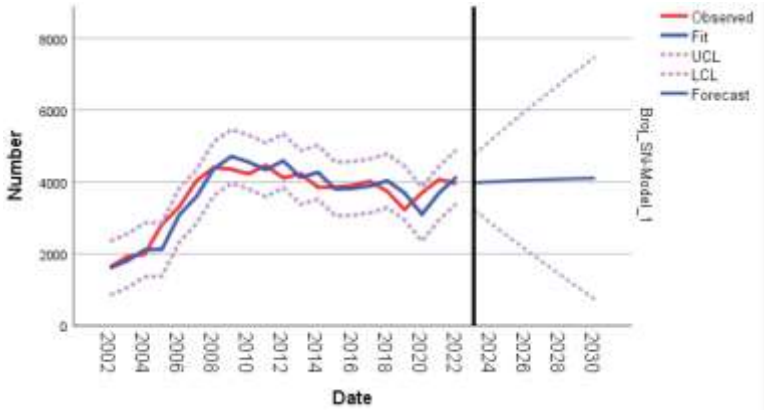


Fig. 2. Forecast of the Number of Traffic Accidents through 2030

Based on the forecasting results, a slight upward trend in traffic accident counts is expected over the next eight years. Specifically, the number of traffic accidents in 2030 is projected to reach 4,106. Compared to the recorded number of traffic accidents in 2022, this represents an increase of 155 accidents, or approximately 3.92%.

3. CONCLUSION

This study enabled a comprehensive analysis of traffic safety through the application of correlation and regression analysis, mean value testing, and autocorrelation analysis. The results confirmed a significant relationship between seat belt usage and the number of fatalities among front-seat occupants in passenger vehicles, as well as a statistically significant variation of fatalities and minimally injured persons in 2022 compared to the average over the past ten years. The only exception was the number of seriously injured persons, for which no statistically significant difference was observed. In addition, autocorrelation of the regression residuals for traffic accident counts was identified, validating the data for future forecasting.

Regular statistical analysis of traffic safety data is essential, as it enables the identification of underlying patterns in traffic accidents and provides a scientific basis for defining effective measures and interventions aimed at reducing them. The SPSS software package proved to be a suitable and effective tool for conducting such complex statistical analyses.

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PRIVATE SECURITY IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA AND IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA – A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

Private security has become an indispensable component of national security systems in modern societies: from protecting people and property to safeguarding critical infrastructure, preventing crime, and participating in emergencies. Its regulation serves a dual purpose: to ensure the effective provision of services while safeguarding public interests, particularly when private security activities may affect citizens' fundamental rights and freedoms.

The aim of the paper is to examine the legal and institutional frameworks governing private security in the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of North Macedonia. A comparative legal-analytical approach was applied, combining a review of national laws and regulations, supported by relevant literature on private security, public-private interactions, and regulatory frameworks.

The analysis reveals both similarities and differences between the two jurisdictions. Common features include licensing procedures, training requirements, and mechanisms for oversight and sanctioning, while differences emerge in the scope of authority granted to private security personnel, the extent of state supervision, and the clarity of legal provisions. The findings suggest that, although both countries have established legal frameworks, there is scope for improvement. Further development of this sector requires not only the enhancement of regulatory solutions but, above all, their consistent implementation and strengthening of institutional oversight, which can increase the responsibility, efficiency, and contribution of private security to the wider national security system.

Keywords*: private security, private security officer, Republic of Serbia, Republic of North Macedonia, regulation.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Due to financial limitations, technological developments, and responsibilities within the domain of national security, certain functions that were the exclusive prerogative of the state and its institutions have been assumed by private security entities.

The reasons for the justification of the existence and further development of the private security sector include good material and technical equipment, practical and financial relief for the police, economic benefits that strengthen the state budget and, finally, increasing the overall security of citizens and the state (Гергинова, 2016, pp. 386-387). Only with the emergence of structured entities whose operations are directly or indirectly aligned with the security functions of the state and within the framework of the national security system can private security be conceptualized and analyzed as a distinct field of activity (Marković, 2023; Marković, 2025).

This paper aims to provide a comparative analysis of the legal framework of private security in the Republic of Serbia and in the Republic of North Macedonia. The rationale for a comparative approach lies in the similarity of legal systems in the two jurisdictions, their shared regional context, and the alignment with broader European standards.

The study focuses on examining key normative aspects of private security regulation, including licensing requirements, professional qualifications and training standards, the scope of powers vested in private security officers, as well as mechanisms of state supervision and sanctioning. The paper seeks to identify similarities and differences between the two regulatory systems, and to highlight laws that explain why private security is important, how it protects people and property, how it should function within the security system, and that its goal is to provide quality and efficient services, not to be a mere formal obligation (Бакрески, 2016, pp. 185-186).

Structurally, the paper is organized into several sections: the first section outlines the theoretical and conceptual foundations of private security; the second section presents an overview of the legal framework of private security in the Republic of Serbia; the third section analyzes the regulatory framework in the Republic of North Macedonia; and the final section offers a comparative assessment and concluding observations.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF PRIVATE SECURITY

Private security is often considered through the concept of *policing*, whereby a distinction is made between public policing and private policing (Daničić and Stajić, 2008; Mijalković and Popović, 2015; Kesić, 2009). Research from the 1980s indicated the accelerated growth of private security and the redistribution of responsibility for protection from the public to the private sector (Cunningham and Taylor, 1985).

The boundary between public and private policing is increasingly blurred, as functions once reserved exclusively for the state have been delegated to private actors. Rather than a simple division of police work, this reflects a broader redistribution of security governance between public and private sectors (Shearing, 1992, p. 411). Despite differing institutional arrangements and responsibilities, these sectors operate in an interconnected manner within a unified security system (Stenning, 2009, p. 23).

In this context, private policing encompasses citizen policing, private security, and private investigative activities (Sparrow, 2014, p. 2), with private security representing the operational component of private policing (Davidović, 2011, p. 460).

The term *private security* refers to the full range of activities aimed at protecting property, individuals, and businesses, carried out by private legal entities engaged in the provision of security services. Comprehensively defined, private security is “a planned and organized independent or joint activity and function of individuals, organizations, private or professional agencies, aimed at their own protection or the protection of others, as well as

the protection of relevant persons, spaces, objects, businesses or activities, which are not covered by the exclusive protection of state authorities" (Daničić and Stajić, 2008, p. 14).

3. PRIVATE SECURITY IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Although certain elements of private security existed within previous legal solutions, formal institutionalization was achieved only in 2013 with the adoption of the Law on Private Security and Law on Detective Activities ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia", No. 104/2013). Since then, the legal framework has been amended twice and further elaborated through several bylaws.[35] However, the adoption of these laws continued to face problems such as the lack of adequately trained personnel, organizational difficulties, and the influence of political connections (Milošević, 2010, p. 123).

The Law on Private Security ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia", No. 104/2013, 42/2015 and 87/2018) defines private security as the provision of services that include the protection of persons, property, and business operations through physical and technical security measures, unless such activities fall within the exclusive competence of state authorities. It also includes the transport of cash and valuables, as well as the maintenance of order at public gatherings, which are carried out by licensed legal entities, entrepreneurs, or internal security units formed for their own needs (Art. 2).

Chapter II regulates the protection of mandatorily secured facilities (Art. 4-5). Chapter III specifies the types of services and licenses that can be obtained by registered legal entities and entrepreneurs for performing private security activities (Art.6-7).

Chapter IV establishes a comprehensive licensing system as a prerequisite for the lawful provision of private security services. The law provides for different types of licenses for legal persons and individuals, depending on the type of service (Art. 9 and 11), with clearly defined general and special conditions (Art. 10 and 12). Licenses and authorizations for training are issued by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (hereinafter: Ministry), and the law regulates in detail the procedures for issuance, extension, revocation and legal protection (Art. 13-18).

Chapter V regulates the way private security services are performed, based on the principle that these activities are carried out without encroaching on the competence of state authorities and with full respect for the rights and freedoms of citizens (Art. 19), exclusively based on a written contract with the service user (Art. 20). The law specifies the obligation of prior risk assessment and preparation of a security plan as basic documents for organizing physical and technical protection (Art. 20-21). The tasks of physical protection with and without weapons are specially regulated, as well as the powers and obligations of security officers (Art. 22-28). Provisions on technical protection (Art. 29-30) define the application of technical systems and measures in compliance with prescribed standards and privacy protection, while the transport of money and valuable shipments is governed by special security requirements (Art. 36-39). Chapter V also regulates the police service at public gatherings and sports events (Art. 40-43), the mandatory establishment and operation of

[35].The currently valid bylaws (December, 2025) are: Regulation on minimum technical requirements for the mandatory installation of technical protection systems in banks and other financial organizations ("OG of RS", No. 9/2021-18), Regulation on the method of performing technical protection tasks and using technical means ("OG of RS", No. 91/2019-89), Regulation on the professional exam for performing private security and security guard services ("OG of RS", No. 74/2019-55), Regulation on the method of exercising the powers of security officers ("OG of RS", No. 59/2019-22), Regulation on the color and components of the security officer uniform ("OG of RS", No. 49/2019-73), Regulation on programs and methods of performing professional training for performing private security and security guard services ("OG of RS", No. 15/2019-58) and the Regulation on detailed conditions for issuing authorizations for conducting training for performing private security and security guard services ("OG of RS", No. 15/2019-56).

control centers (Art. 44), as well as the self-protection activity of legal entities for their own needs (Art. 45).

Chapter VI defines the powers of private security officers, which are applied exclusively within the law, proportionally and in accordance with specific circumstances (Art. 46). All powers must be clearly defined in the contract with the service user, and their regulation ensures the legal, proportional and controlled work of private security officers.

Subsequent chapters contain detailed rules on uniforms, identification, vehicle marking, record keeping, data protection, supervision and sanctions. Officials must wear a uniform during work, which must be distinguished from the uniforms of state bodies (Art. 60-61), while identification is issued by the Ministry and must be worn visibly or shown at the request of authorized persons (Art. 62-64). Legal entities and entrepreneurs must keep extensive records (Art. 67-67a), and the collected data is confidential and used exclusively for the purpose for which it was collected (Art. 68-69). The Ministry and authorized police officers supervise the performance of work (Art. 70-75). Violations of the law are subject to fines and protective measures, including a ban on activities or business (Art. 76-84).

4. PRIVATE SECURITY IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

The normative basis for the development of private security in the Republic of North Macedonia was established by the adoption of two laws in December 1999: the Law on the Security of Persons and Property and the Law on Detective Activities, published in the "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia", No. 80 of December 17, 1999. As in neighborung countries, individuals and groups who illegally protected property, maintained ties with political parties, or had ties with the police suspected of recruiting people continued to operate for some time (Dimovski, Ilijevski and Babanoski, 2012, p. 78).

The Law on the Security of Persons and Property was the first formal legal instrument to establish the basic criteria and conditions for the normative regulation of the new activity – the protection of persons and property. In addition to the normative regulation of basic issues, the aforementioned law enabled the establishment of the Chamber of the Republic of Macedonia for the Security of Persons and Property, as an expert body whose work contributed to the drafting of the text of the new draft of the Law on Private Security.

Thus, in 2012, the Law on Private Security ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia", No. 166/2012) was adopted. This law was the first to carry out a terminological adjustment of the name of the activity, changing it from *security of persons and property* to *private security*. Since then, the Law has been revised several times, including amendments in 2020, and several bylaws have been adopted.[36]

The Law on Private Security ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia", No. 166/2012, 164/2013, 148/2015, 193/2015, 55/2016; and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia", No. 302/2020) defines private security as an activity of public interest,

[36] In 2014, the following bylaws were adopted: the Regulation on Amendments and Supplements to the Regulation on the Content of the Program and the Method of Training Persons for Physical and Technical Security, Taking Professional Exams, The Form and Content of the Application Form for Issuing a Private Security License and the Form and Content of the Private Security License Forms, and the Regulation on Criteria Regarding Spatial Conditions and Material, Technical and IT Equipment of the Premises for Taking Professional Exams for Physical and Technical Security ("OG of RM" No. 137/14), as well as the Regulation on the Method of Scoring Answers to Questions from Professional Exams for Physical and Technical Security ("OG of RM" No. 145/14).

which includes the protection of persons and property carried out by legal entities that have a private security license (Art. 2 and 7).

The types of private security are listed in two forms: providing services and for own needs (Art. 8). Private security in the form of providing services refers to the protection of persons and property based on a signed contract, performed by a legal entity that has registered its activity and obtained a license for private security in the form of providing services. Private security for own needs refers to the protection of property and persons within a legal entity, performed by private security workers employed by that entity, which has obtained a license for private security for its own needs (Art. 7).

Furthermore, the law distinguishes between physical security and technical security, with physical security including physical protection, monitoring and patrol security, security of transport and transfer of money and other valuables, and security of public gatherings and other events (Art. 9).

Chapter II systematically regulates the conditions for performing private security activities through a precisely defined regime of permits and licenses for legal persons and individuals. A legal person may perform private security activities only after obtaining a permit from the Ministry and registering the activity, fulfilling the prescribed conditions. The law also provides for the possibility of revoking the permit in case of inactivity or violation of regulations (Art. 10-19).

In parallel, individuals may perform private security activities only with the possession of a license and a private security identification card (legitimation), issued by the Chamber of the Republic of North Macedonia for private security (hereinafter: Chamber), under prescribed conditions (Art. 20-22). The system of training and professional examinations is regulated in detail, with the participation of the Chamber and institutional supervision by the Ministry (Art. 23-24-ж). Legitimation cards are issued and revoked depending on the continuous fulfillment of legal requirements (Art. 25).

Chapter III regulates physical security with weapons (Art. 27-31), physical protection (Art. 32), patrol and monitoring (Art. 33), the use of intervention patrols (Art. 34), as well as the provision of transport and transfer of money and valuables with specially equipped vehicles and trained workers (Art. 35-37).

Public security at events and public gatherings is regulated by Articles 38-39, including the obligation to develop a security plan for larger gatherings. Technical security is ensured by utilizing technical means to prevent unlawful actions and protect the privacy of citizens (Art. 40-41), with the obligation to maintain the quality and accuracy of devices in accordance with established standards (Art. 42).

Chapter IV covers the area of private security for own needs (Article 43), regulating the permit for the security of property and persons of a legal entity, which is performed by the employees of that entity, with a prohibition on providing services to other persons.

Chapter V covers the area of mandatory private security (Article 44) and regulates cases when the government prescribes mandatory security, as well as the possibility of providing security through its own employees or by engaging legal entities that provide security services.

Chapter VI regulates the powers of security officers (Art. 45). The security officer is obliged to carry identification (Art. 46), act on the orders of authorized officials (Art. 47), respect the reputation and dignity of citizens and human rights when exercising his powers (Art. 48), and prepare a written report for all actions (Art. 57).

Chapter VII regulates the uniforms and identification (Art. 58), while Chapter VIII regulates the powers and method of financing the Chamber.

The legislative framework of the Republic of North Macedonia establishes a high degree of formalization in the field of private security through detailed standardized records, supervision and misdemeanor liability. The Ministry maintains a central record of permits with long retention periods for personal data (Art. 62), while the Chamber and legal entities have statutory obligations to keep special records (Art. 63 and 64), with mandatory application of regulations on data protection (Art. 65).

Supervision is centralized in the Ministry(Art. 66-70). The misdemeanor system is elaborated and differentiated according to the types of subjects, with high fines and protective measures prohibiting the performance of activities (Art. 72-76-v). The normative framework is rounded off by the minister's broad authority to enact bylaws (Art. 79).

5. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PRIVATE SECURITY SYSTEM IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA AND THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

The definition of private security in the legislation of the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of North Macedonia indicates significant normative similarity in basic concepts, but also certain differences in terminological and structural approaches. The Law on Private Security of the Republic of Serbia (hereinafter: LoPSRS) defines private security as the activity of providing services for the protection of persons, property, and businesses, through physical and technical protection, when these activities are not within the exclusive jurisdiction of state authorities. It also includes the activities of transporting money, valuables and other consignments, maintaining order at public gatherings, sports events and other places of gathering (Art. 2 LoPSRS).

Similarly, the Law on Private Security of the Republic of North Macedonia (hereinafter: LoPSRNM) defines private security as the activity of protecting persons and property, which is carried out as a service or for one's own needs, while also clearly distinguishing it from activities that fall under the exclusive jurisdiction of state authorities (Art. 7, 8 and 9 LoPSRNM). The performance of activities in the form of providing services to others or for one's own needs is recognized in both legal solutions. However, Macedonian legislation places a more explicit emphasis on the distinction between contractual private security services and internal (self-protection) activities, while Serbian legislation integrates both forms within a single normative definition. On the other hand, the approach to defining private security in the Republic of Serbia is broader in terms of activities.

As subjects of private security, Serbian legislation recognizes a legal entity for private security, a private security entrepreneur, and a security officer (Art. 3 LoPSRS). Macedonian legislation, on the other hand, recognizes only two categories: a legal entity for private security and a private security worker (hereinafter: security officer) (Art. 3 and 7 LoPSRNM). However, it can be concluded that the first category in Macedonian law includes micro-traders, small traders, medium-sized traders and large traders (see more in the section on penal provisions in LoPSRNM).

In terms of types of work, Serbian law explicitly differentiates between risk assessment, physical and technical protection of persons and property, supervision and maintenance of technical protection systems, as well as securing the transport of money and valuables outside the jurisdiction of the Ministry (Art. 6 LoPSRS), which it further specifies through a licensing system. By contrast, Macedonian law systematizes private security work primarily through the division into physical and technical security, with physical security further broken down into physical protection, monitoring and patrol, securing the transport and transfer of money and other valuables, as well as securing public gatherings and other

events (Art. 9 LoPSRNM). This difference indicates a more detailed approach of the Serbian legislator in terms of types of services, in contrast to the Macedonian normative model that relies on broader, functionally defined categories.

In terms of licensing, Serbian law establishes a differentiated and functionally specific system, with clearly separated types of licenses for specific activities (Art. 8-12 LoPSRS), with clearly prescribed general and special conditions, the time validity of licenses, and the reasons for their revocation (Art. 16-17 LoPSRS). In North Macedonia, the regulation is normatively simpler and more focused on licensing the activity as a whole (see more in Articles 12-14 LoPSRNM).

In North Macedonia, the right of a legal entity to provide private security is conditional on registering the activity and obtaining a permit from the Ministry, either for the provision of services or for its own needs (Art. 10 and 12 LoPSRNM). This corresponds to the solution in Serbia, where the performance of the activity is also conditional on a license from the competent authority and registration in the register (Art. 9 and 10 LoPSRS). When it comes to the conditions for issuing a permit to legal entities, Serbian law contains fewer quantitatively specified criteria, relying more on secondary legislation (Art. 13 LoPSRS).

Differences are observed in the time period for notifying the competent entities about the cessation of work (eight days in Serbia and three days in North Macedonia); in the competent entity itself (the competent police administration in Serbia and the Chamber in North Macedonia) and in the obligation to start work within six months from the date of issuance of the license (Art. 11 LoPSRNM). Also, in North Macedonia, the Chamber of Private Security has a significant role in the licensing system (Chapter VIII). In contrast, Serbian legislation does not foresee the existence of such a body, but rather allows for the establishment of an advisory body to monitor the field of private security and improve cooperation, with the Minister responsible for establishing the Expert Council for the Improvement of Private Security and Public-Private Partnership in the Security Sector (Art. 75). Furthermore, the latest amendments to Serbian legislation provide for the possibility of engaging an accredited body that assesses the compliance of the quality of private security services (Art. 75a LoPSRS).

In relation to individuals, both systems provide for the mandatory possession of a license and identification as a basic prerequisite for work (Art. 12 and 63 LoPSRS; Art. 20 and 25 LoPSRNM), with almost identical conditions (Art. 12 LoPSRS; Art. 22 LoPSRNM). However, Macedonian law stands out with an elaborate and transparent system of training and professional examinations, with electronic testing and supervision (Art. 24-24-ж LoPSRNM), while in Serbia, this segment is regulated more concisely, with greater dependence on bylaws. Both legal systems require mandatory training and the successful completion of a professional exam; however, in Serbia, these activities are supervised primarily by state authorities, whereas in North Macedonia, the Chamber of Private Security performs most functions related to quality control and professional standards.

When comparing the regulation of private security services in Serbia and North Macedonia, it is evident that both legal systems are based on the common principle that private security services must be performed lawfully, without violating public order and without encroaching on the jurisdiction of state authorities (Art. 19 LoPSRS and Art. 5 LoPSRNM), and with the obligation to conclude a contract for the provision of services (Art. 20 LoPSRS and Art. 6 LoPSRNM). In Serbia, Chapter V of the Law on Private Security establishes a highly detailed and procedurally elaborated framework that includes the obligation to prepare a risk assessment and a security plan (Art. 20 LoPSRS), as well as elaborated private security services (Art. 21-45 LoPSRS). In North Macedonia, Chapter III

of the Law on Private Security regulates the manner of performing private security at a more general normative level (Art. 27-42 LoPSRNM), with an emphasis on the security plan when a public gathering or event is held (Art. 39 LoPSRNM).

In terms of the powers of security officers, the regulations are basically the same, and the powers are equivalent. What is noticeable is that the powers are more comprehensively prescribed by both law and bylaws in Serbian legislation. For example, Macedonian legislation only distinguishes the use of weapons and the use of trained dogs from means of coercion (Art. 55 and 56 LoPSRNM). Moreover, in both systems, the identification of officers, notification and reporting, as well as the obligation to respect human dignity and the proportional use of force, constitute a common normative foundation.

Both legal systems prescribe the obligation to keep registers. In Serbian legislation, this obligation belongs to the legal entity for private security, the private security entrepreneur, and educational institutions authorized to conduct training (Articles 67 and 67a LoPSRS). In Macedonian legislation, this obligation belongs to the Ministry, the Chamber, and legal entities that provide private security (Articles 62, 63 and 64 LoPSRNM). There are differences in terms of prescribing the contents of the register, which are more detailed in Serbia, as well as the obligation to maintain them. In Serbia, the legislator refers to the legal retention period, while in North Macedonia, the period is precisely expressed in years.

Both legal systems prescribe the obligation to supervise the work of private security entities. In Serbian legislation, supervision is carried out by the Ministry, authorized police officers, and inspection bodies (Art. 70 and 71 LoPSRS). In Macedonian legislation, supervision is carried out by the Ministry through authorized police officers and the supervisory commission formed by the Ministry (Art. 66 and 67 LoPSRNM). Both legislations prescribe the powers of authorized police officers, with the provision that in Serbian legislation, some powers are prescribed in more detail (see, for example, Art. 71, par. 7 and Art. 73 LoPSRS).

In terms of penal provisions, both legal solutions have their own specificities. In Serbia, penal provisions are differentiated in relation to legal entities and private security entrepreneurs, responsible persons and private security officers, as well as legal entities that use private security services and responsible persons in them, organizers of gatherings, legal entities that carry out self-protection activities, and educational institutions that conduct training, including responsible persons and lecturers (Chapter XI LoPSRS). In North Macedonia, penal provisions are differentiated in relation to legal entities for private security and responsible persons in them, for individuals, (i.e. security officers), but also for the Chamber and for authorized police officers of the Ministry (Chapter XI LoPSRNM), which is not recognized in Serbian legislation.

Finally, both legal solutions single out a special type of facilities whose protection and security are mandatory. These are mandatorily secured objects (Art. 4-5 LoPSRS) or special objects of importance for security (Art. 44 LoPSRNM).

Analyzing the texts of the laws, it is noticeable that certain issues are elaborated to varying extents, and that issues less elaborated in the law are elaborated in bylaws. If we take the authorization of security officers as an example, Serbian legislation has elaborated this area in a separate bylaw, while in Macedonian legislation, this has been done in the law itself. Although in both cases the laws are supplemented by bylaws, a greater degree of normative detail and greater standardization is noticeable in Serbia.

6. CONCLUSION

A comparative analysis shows that the regulation of private security in the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of North Macedonia rests on a common conceptual basis. Both legal frameworks show significant normative convergence in defining private security, regulating licensing, prescribing conditions for legal and natural persons, establishing oversight mechanisms, and protecting human rights through the principles of legality, proportionality and accountability. However, significant differences still exist in legislative technique and regulatory intensity. Serbian legislation is characterized by a more detailed, functionally differentiated and risk-oriented normative model, with extensive procedural regulation, a segmented licensing system, elaborate registers, supervision and penal provisions, and a stronger emphasis on direct state control. In contrast, Macedonian legislation adopts a more simplified approach, relying on broader legal categories, simplified licensing of activities, and a pronounced role for the Chamber of Private Security as a mechanism of professional self-regulation under state supervision.

Despite the formal normative regulation of the private security system in the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of North Macedonia, practice shows that the established legal frameworks still do not guarantee full professionalization. The problems that once existed in the form of a large number of retired or dismissed former members of the security services, connections with political parties, and even inadequately trained personnel and insufficient material and technical equipment are still present to some extent. Inconsistent application of regulations, limited capacities of supervisory bodies, and existing political and market pressures contribute to the survival of unfair competition and uneven quality of security services. In this context, private security has not yet been fully accepted as a strategically regulated part of the national security system. Further development of this sector requires not only the improvement of regulatory solutions but, above all, their consistent implementation and strengthening of institutional oversight.

The analysis carried out in the paper includes only the parent laws in the field of private security – the Law on Private Security of the Republic of Serbia and the Law on Private Security of the Republic of North Macedonia. Future research may be more comprehensive, encompassing a broader normative framework that includes documents such as the constitution, strategic documents, relevant laws and bylaws, as well as the rules of the profession and “good practice”

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POLICE AND CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN THE FUNCTION OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND STABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Cultural diplomacy in the security sector represents an important, but often insufficiently researched, aspect of contemporary international relations. It manifests itself through the actions of security institutions, especially the police, in an international and multicultural context, where security is not only a matter of control and force, but also of trust, understanding, and respect for cultural differences.

Through international cooperation, joint training, and participation in peacekeeping and civilian missions, the security sector contributes to the promotion of democratic values, human rights, and a positive image of the state. In this way, cultural diplomacy is affirmed as an effective means of promoting stability, preventing conflicts, and strengthening international security, with security actors positioning themselves as important bearers of diplomatic and cultural influence.

Modern transnational criminal networks represent a complex and dynamic threat to national and international security, characterized by high professionalism, technological sophistication and the ability to adapt to different cultural and social contexts. In this context, the police face challenges that transcend national borders and require an integrated approach, in which cultural diplomacy plays a key role.

Key terms used in the preparation of this scientific research paper are: cultural diplomacy, security sector, police, international cooperation, international security.

1. INTRODUCTION

During the 20th century, security in international relations was mainly analyzed through the prism of military power and relations between states. However, the end of the Cold War, processes of globalization, and the emergence of new security threats led to a significant transformation of the security concept. Today, threats such as transnational organized crime, terrorism, human trafficking, cybercrime, and mass migrations require a response that is simultaneously security-oriented, institutional, and cultural.

Concern for security exists in almost all cultures and in a wide range of social areas, such as politics, health, information technology, ecology, sports, psychology, economics, finance, and architecture. At the same time, it always occupies a central place on the political scene. Security can be most simply defined as a universal human aspiration for safety that is present at all times and in all cultures. This definition has a universal character that stems from the importance of security for the existence of every person, regardless of age, gender, professional, ethnic, national, or racial affiliation. In essence, all people want to live safely

in a peaceful society, in spaces where their full potential can be developed, and in an ecologically healthy environment. This also means that every person, regardless of the cost, strives to avoid all threats and risks that endanger them (Georgievska, 2015:40)

Security is a state in which everyone can exercise their rights and freedoms, which essentially means freely developing their life project (Jakimovski, 2014:67). Unstable and unsafe societies are not only a threat to well-being, but often become an existential threat. Thus, the survival and security of a society are considered among the most precious goods.

The world, which strives towards prosperity, gives priority to peace. Traditionally, peace has been defined as the absence of war. Given that people are at the center of existence, it may be relevant to redefine peace in a human context. Peace prevails only when the situation is conducive to the growth of human well-being. Life is generally considered safe when factors that cause physical harm are absent. However, security exists at a much higher level than mere physical safety (Georgievska, 2015:56).

2. DEFINING SECURITY AND THE ROLE OF THE POLICE

Security is a state in which individuals, the community, and the state are protected from threats that may endanger life, property, freedom and fundamental social values. It is not limited to the absence of danger, but also encompasses a sense of security, stability and trust in institutions. In the contemporary context, security has a broader meaning and includes political, social, economic, and cultural dimensions, with an emphasis on prevention, international cooperation, and respect for human rights.

Cultural diplomacy, on the other hand, is part of a state's foreign policy through which culture, tradition, language, and values are used as means of building a positive image and promoting international relations. It aims to encourage mutual understanding, tolerance and trust between peoples, with culture serving as a bridge for dialogue and cooperation. In this process, cultural diplomacy contributes to reducing conflicts and strengthening peace, especially in multicultural and sensitive security environments.

The role of the police lies at the intersection of security and cultural diplomacy. As a key institution of the security system, the police are responsible for maintaining public order and peace, preventing and detecting crime, and protecting the rights and freedoms of citizens. However, under conditions of increased international connectivity, the police increasingly appear as representatives of the state in international contacts, cross-border cooperation, and peacekeeping missions (Gjorgjiev, V., Kotevski, P. 2019:120). Their conduct, respect for cultural differences, and application of democratic standards make the police an important actor in promoting cultural values and building trust, thereby giving them a significant role within cultural diplomacy.

Modern transnational criminal networks represent one of the greatest threats to the security and stability of states. These networks are characterized by a high degree of professionalization, the use of new technologies, and adaptation to different cultural and social environments. The police face challenges that transcend national borders and require international cooperation. Cultural diplomacy, as part of the "soft power" in international relations, enables trust-building, facilitates communication and strengthens partnerships in the fight against organized crime.

Globalization, digitalization, and transnational migration processes have led to significant changes in criminal activities. Contemporary serious and organized crime is complex, transnational, and often embedded in local cultural, economic, and political

contexts. The police are therefore faced with the need for new strategies that combine traditional security measures with elements of cultural diplomacy.

Globalization and technological progress have transformed criminal activities. Organized crime today is transnational, often operating through networks that have merged with local cultural and economic structures. The police, as an institution responsible for public safety, face the need for new strategies that integrate classic security measures with diplomatic and cultural approaches. The link between cultural diplomacy and security becomes particularly important in regions such as the Western Balkans, where ethnic and cultural diversity can influence the effectiveness of police operations and international cooperation (Penninx, R.2000:56).

3. THE POLICE AS A TRANSNATIONAL SECURITY AND DIPLOMATIC ACTOR

Modern police operate within complex networks of cooperation. Information sharing, joint investigation teams, and the harmonisation of standards require not only technical expertise, but also a high level of diplomatic communication. Police officers, especially those involved in international missions, act as "diplomats", whose behaviour directly influences the perception of the state they represent.

In this new reality, the police take on a central role. They are no longer just an instrument for enforcing the law within the nation-state, but are becoming transnational actors, involved in networks of international cooperation and diplomatic interactions. The police represent a point of intersection between "hard" and "soft" power, and their role is crucial for understanding contemporary security relations between the individual and security.

Modern criminal networks are characterised by transnational action and mobility – members move across multiple countries and use different legal systems to conceal their activities. They usedigital technologies such as cybercrime, financial fraud, abuse of cryptocurrencies and social networks, as well as the infiltration of legal businesses and institutions – money laundering, corruption, political influence, and multi-criminal activities combining drug trafficking, human trafficking, arms trafficking and terrorism. (Jovanovski, 2018:46)

Cultural diplomacy is traditionally associated with art, education, and cultural exchange, but its role in the security sector is increasingly pronounced. In the police context, it manifests itself through: intercultural communication, respect for local customs, transparency and legitimacy, and the protection of human rights. In this way, the police become part of the soft power of the state (Nye, 2004).

Modern criminal networks are characterized by transnational operations, rapid mobility of members, the use of digital technologies and encrypted communications, infiltration of legal businesses and institutions, financial crime, human trafficking, cybercrime, and terrorist activities.

The number of attacks on banking systems, digital platforms, and private data is increasing. The police must develop highly technical capabilities and international partnerships to deal with these threats. Criminal networks adapt to local cultural structures and exploit social and economic weaknesses. Cooperation between the police, NGOs and international institutions is particularly important in this context. The use of international financial centers and offshore zones to conceal illegal income requires the police and financial regulators to act in a coordinated manner at the international level.

4. POLICE AND INTERNATIONAL TRUST BUILDING

For the police, cultural diplomacy is an instrument that reduces the risk of conflict and mistrust in transnational operations. It enables a better understanding of local cultural peculiarities, the building of trust and partnership with police forces and civil communities, and facilitates international cooperation and information exchange. Cultural diplomacy is defined as the use of cultural, educational, and social channels to build trust and positive interstate relations.

In the context of security, it facilitates communication and information exchange between the police and foreign institutions, reduces cultural and ethnic barriers, enables greater cooperation, and builds trust within communities, which is crucial for wiretapping, reporting criminal activities, and successful operations (Schwartz, J. S., Montgomery, J. M., Briones, E 2006: 209). The application of cultural diplomacy can contribute to the improvement of police work through training in intercultural communication, exchange programs for police personnel between countries, and the formation of international teams for joint operations.

The police face several challenges, including differences in legal systems and police practices, language and cultural barriers, political interests that affect security cooperation, and a lack of cultural competence among security personnel. These factors can limit the exchange of information and the coordination of joint operations.

Trust is a central category in international relations. Police cooperation contributes to institutional trust, political stability, and long-term partnerships. Through everyday practical interaction, the police create a "micro-level" of trust that has macro-political consequences.

The connection between the police and cultural diplomacy is reflected in their shared role in representing the state and building trust in international relations. Although the police are primarily associated with maintaining order and security within a country, their actions have a broader meaning, especially in contacts with foreign citizens, international organizations, and participation in cross-border and peacekeeping missions. In such situations, the police are not only a security institution, but also a bearer of the cultural values, norms, and ways of functioning of the society from which they come.

5. POLICE IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

International police cooperation is one of the clearest links between the police and cultural diplomacy. When police officers cooperate with colleagues from other countries, they not only exchange professional experiences and good practices, but also become acquainted with different cultures, legal systems, and ways of working. Such cooperation builds mutual trust, which is the basis for stable international relations and one of the key elements of cultural diplomacy.

The police are also often perceived as the "face" of the state, especially in contacts with foreigners, migrants, tourists and representatives of international organizations. The way in which police officers communicate, act, and respect the rights of individuals directly influences the image others form of the state. A professional, transparent and culturally sensitive police force contributes to building a positive democratic and cultural image, which also strengthens the diplomatic position of the state on the international stage (Golubović, 2006:194).

In this context, a significant role is also played by the training of modern police officers, which is increasingly focused on respecting cultural differences, working in

multicultural environments, and protecting human rights. These elements represent a combination of the security functions of the police and the cultural values of society, demonstrating that effective security cannot exist without respect for the culture and dignity of each individual.

Additionally, the participation of the police in peacekeeping and civilian missions abroad expands their role beyond classic security tasks (Wendt, 1999: 98). In such missions, the police contribute to promoting dialogue, stability, and cultural understanding in societies that often face conflicts and division. In this way, they become active actors in the processes of reconciliation and cooperation.

The significance of the connection between the police and cultural diplomacy lies in the fact that it strengthens international security, improves the image of the state, and contributes to peace and cooperation between nations. This connection demonstrates that the police are not only an instrument of internal order, but also an important factor in building stable and positive international relations.

6. FUTURE TRENDS AND CHALLENGES FOR THE POLICE IN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

It is important to emphasize that in modern societies the role of the police increasingly goes beyond the classic function of law enforcement and is directed towards building partnerships with the community. In multicultural environments, the police are often the first institution with which foreign citizens and minority communities come into contact; therefore, the way they act has a direct impact on feelings of acceptance and respect. Such an approach not only increases internal stability, but also indirectly supports cultural diplomacy, as the state presents itself as open, inclusive, and democratic.

Through joint projects, regional initiatives, and exchange programs, the police also participate in creating networks of trust between states. These contacts contribute to a better understanding of different cultural and social contexts, which facilitates communication and cooperation on sensitive security issues. In this way, cultural diplomacy is not achieved solely through formal diplomatic channels, but also through the everyday professional interaction of police officers with their international partners (Europol, 2023).

Future trends and challenges for police in international cooperation are closely linked to globalisation, technological development and increased interdependence between states. Modern security threats are no longer limited to the borders of a single state, which makes international police cooperation necessary, but also more complex than ever before.

One of the key trends is the increasing digitalisation and use of advanced technologies in police work. Cybercrime, online radicalisation, and the misuse of digital platforms require rapid information exchange and joint investigations between police services from different countries. However, significant challenges arise, such as differences in legal regulations on personal data protection and varying levels of technological development between states, which can hinder cooperation.

Another important trend is the increased attention to human rights and the rule of law within international police cooperation. Police must act efficiently, but at the same time in accordance with international standards and the cultural specificities of the environment in which they operate. This is particularly challenging in joint operations, where different legal systems, professional cultures, and levels of institutional development intersect.

Migration and cross-border movements of people represent another area in which international police cooperation will gain increasing importance. Police will need to strike a

balance between protecting state borders, preventing crime, and respecting the dignity and rights of migrants (Albanese, J. S., 2016:55). This process requires not only security measures, but also a high level of cultural sensitivity and interstate coordination.

In addition, the future of international police cooperation will depend on strengthening trust between states. Political tensions, differing security priorities, and uneven levels of transparency can limit information sharing and joint action. Continued investment in joint training, communication mechanisms, and cooperation platforms will therefore be necessary. These efforts must go beyond formal framework and enable genuine partnership.

In conclusion, future trends present new opportunities, but also serious challenges for police in international cooperation. Successfully addressing them will depend on the ability of the police to adapt, cooperate, and respect universal values, with security, culture, and diplomacy remaining closely interconnected.

7. CONCLUSION

This paper demonstrates that the police are an essential, yet often under-analyzed, actor in contemporary international relations. Through transnational cooperation and cultural diplomacy, the police contribute to strengthening soft power, stability, and peace. Understanding this connection is crucial for the development of effective and legitimate security policies in the 21st century.

New forms of serious and organized crime require an integrated approach that, in addition to traditional security measures, includes elements of cultural diplomacy. Much more is needed to develop a coherent, strategic, and systematic approach to serious and organized crime and corruption – one that encompasses the pillars of security, development, and human rights, and includes a strong preventive dimension. Efforts must also be made to understand the role of organized crime throughout each phase of the conflict cycle and to design interventions that prevent it from becoming entrenched in symbiotic relationships with corruption and from fueling new cycles of conflict.

For the police, the development of cultural sensitivity, intercultural communication, and trust in international relations is a key condition for the successful fight against transnational crime. Only by combining security and diplomatic instruments can the complex threats posed by modern crime be effectively addressed. Contemporary forms of serious and organized crime require a multidimensional approach in which traditional security measures are complemented by cultural diplomacy to build trust, enable effective international cooperation, and respond to with transnational threats.

Globalization and the increasing dynamics of international relations require greater attention to culture and its potential to enrich and expand foreign policy programs. The use of police capacities through cultural diplomacy contributes to a more comprehensive distribution and accumulation of institutional effectiveness and development.

The application of cultural diplomacy in police activities – particularly in contexts where traditional diplomatic methods are ineffective or inappropriate – broadens the scope of police culture and practice. Cultural diplomacy aims to create a positive image of the country through culture, tradition, and values, and to foster mutual understanding between peoples. This is where its point of contact with the police emerges, as the professional, transparent, and culturally sensitive conduct of police officers directly influences the perception that foreigners form of a country. Communication practices, respect for human

rights, and an understanding of cultural differences are key elements that strengthen trust and enhance a country's international reputation.

Furthermore, international police cooperation and participation in training programs and missions enable the exchange of experiences and cultural influences, thereby deepening cooperation between states not only at the security level, but also at the cultural level. In this way, the police become part of a broader diplomatic effort aimed at stability, peace, and mutual understanding. The connection between the police and cultural diplomacy thus emerges as a subtle yet significant relationship, in which security and culture jointly contribute to improved international relations.

In conclusion, the police are an important –lthough often under-recognized – actor in cultural diplomacy. Through their behavior, values, and modes of cooperation, they contribute to shaping a positive image of the state and advancing international relations, demonstrating that security and culture are not opposing forces, but interconnected and complementary.

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