

SECURITY CULTURE, EVOLUTION, AND PARTICULARITIES

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Abstract: *In times when the issue of state and individual security is on everyone's lips, the need for a security culture adapted to the challenges of the security environment is increasingly felt. If going through a pandemic that left behind a world devastated primarily on a psychological and emotional level, but also physically, made us rethink our value scale and prioritize strengthening our immune system, similarly, the conflicts taking place near our borders, as well as those occurring at considerable distances which have equally disastrous consequences for a society already vulnerable and seemingly having lost all control over its direction, lead to the need to place special importance on consolidating and raising the level of security culture, especially regarding responsible institutions, but also citizens whose lives are directly affected by the lack of essential knowledge for a resilient lifestyle in the field of security. The paper aims to identify the problems that have prevented us from evolving in the field of security culture and to draw attention to the fact that avoiding taking absolutely necessary measures and the lack of constant and coherent concerns can lead to situations that could be catastrophic for our nation and which could be avoided through sustained effort.*

Keywords: Security Culture, values, norms, democratic society

1. Introduction

In addressing the topic, I set out for myself, I started from some generalities, transformed into definitions, others as phrases that I considered relevant to my approach, then particularized them to finally arrive at a conclusive picture of the current state of our security culture. In the paper, I analyzed the documents I used as bibliographic material, compared the opinions of several authors, and extracted the information that would help me create my own informational puzzle from which certain conclusions could be drawn. Moreover, I made the interpretations in my own way, also relying on the responses I received from my students in the seminars where I addressed this topic. I can even

specify that I aligned the succession of ideas with a future appreciation from future students with whom I will discuss this topic, particularly the utility of knowing the state of the security culture at the national level, who is responsible for its deficiencies, and not least, who frequently appeals to it, whether it is individuals with expertise in the security field or much broader categories of people.

2. Security Culture, Characteristic Factors

Security culture reflects behavior that is in accordance with the safety of the internal and external environment, based on values, norms, attitudes, knowledge, and assumed actions, representing a constitutive element of organizational culture.

The success and safety of activities within an organization are determined by behavior that ensures the safety of each employee. Security and health protection during activities are ensured by serious awareness of existing risks and the measures that must be taken to ensure safety. Accidents are not caused by a single danger; there are other conditions that contribute, such as partially implemented security measures or non-compliance with requirements. Such negligence leads to deficiencies in safety measures and facilitates accidents.

The figure below lists some elements that underpin a solid security culture.



Leadership commitment or the commitment assumed by management is indispensable for the successful implementation of a security culture within any company. If the company's leadership sets a good example, it will be easier to convince employees of health and safety measures in the workplace.

Communication is the bridge for implementing a security culture. Communication includes discussions among the involved parties, responses to “why” and “how” regarding the objectives and measures implemented.

Training and education - additional instructions and proper training tailored to operational requirements ensure a good security culture. Compliance with legal requirements is not sufficient.

Motivation - employees who openly express their opinions and make improvement proposals without fearing disadvantages or even punishment actively contribute to the development of a good security culture.

Personalized security measures - the actions of each employee taken into consideration determine the success of the security culture. Conscious acceptance of risks (“It has always worked well until now...”) or ignoring existing, safe procedures are detrimental to positive development of the security culture. Intentional disregard of one's own instructions often leads to accidents.

Proactive security awareness - all employees should constantly reflect on their own initiatives and actions, question them, and correct them if necessary. Changes in the work environment should always be taken into account.

Continuous improvement - solutions tailored to operational specifics increase acceptance, are supported by everyone, and are not perceived as an additional burden. Excessive documentation should be avoided as employees perceive it as a burden and unnecessary bureaucracy [1].

3. Security Culture, Formation

At the national level, security strategies are achieved through a joint effort involving both military and civilian institutions, and citizens are also held accountable. When asked: where is a strong security culture needed, with reference to social environments, the answer is: among the population and political decision-makers. When asked how, in what way it should be achieved, the answer is: concurrently with an exponential increase in transparency at the level of institutions empowered to ensure national security, there should also be a great openness to the creation of collaborative networks integrating specialized institutions, Open Source Intelligence (OSINT), academic institutions, and experts from the private sector.

For the defense of security, whether national or global, there is a need for a strong promotion of security culture.

For the optimization of an intelligence service, which is responsible for safeguarding state security with all the responsibilities it entails, cooperation is needed among institutions and organizations covering a wide range of

fields. Domains that are difficult to access are important, where an officer with official prerogatives may have difficulty penetrating and may not have access to vital information. To achieve efficient cooperation, the concept of security culture must be ingrained in everyone's consciousness, as this is necessary for personal and group protection, prioritized at both the citizen and political decision-maker levels. Because at birth, no citizen receives an "instruction manual" on how to

defend oneself and contribute to the security of the state to which they belong. It is necessary to create a set of rules either on their own initiative, forced or not by circumstances, or with the help of institutions empowered in this regard.

Romanian citizens can create a solid security culture both through the use of open sources and through initiatives of an authority such as the Romanian Intelligence Service.

Table 1 Change in safety culture [2]

Reference Dimensions:	
Whose safety should be guaranteed?	
Of the state,	as it in turn guarantees the safety of its people.
Of society,	as society has agreed upon a state only to live in safety.
Of the individual,	as it takes precedence over the collective.
Dimension of Matters:	
What issues should be perceived as security threats?	
Military,	as military attacks mean a loss of self-determination.
Economic,	as the well-being of a society is closely linked to its prosperity.
Ecological,	as environmental issues can also endanger the well-being of societies.
Humanitarian,	as human rights must also be protected.
Spatial Dimension:	
In which geographical space should security be created?	
Nation,	as only within the nation-state can problems be addressed.
Region,	as states can come together to create security.
International,	s only through international cooperation can states ensure a reasonable level of security.
Global,	as security should be ensured for humanity as a whole.
Dimension of Danger:	
When should states ensure security?	
In the face of threats,	as then there is relatively secure knowledge about the behaviour, intentions, and strength of hostile actors.
In vulnerability,	as dangers do not always presuppose consciously hostile actors.
In risks,	as many security threats are not clearly defined.

4. Security Culture, Sign of a Civilization and Democracy Space

Security culture is also a way of thinking, of relating to the community, the nation, and the interests that constitute the foundation upon which the state is built. Critical thinking and selective reporting by individuals on national security issues or the aspirations for a secure world, or the salvation of humanity from the scourge of conflicts indicate the possession of a solid security culture.

The individual level of security culture is influenced by many variables, and as a social phenomenon, it is continuously evolving. At the individual level, it depends first on the level of social awareness and the level of civilization the individual is capable of. Citizen involvement in community life also plays an important role, as does a conscious engagement with issues of security within their sphere of interest. It is unimaginable that a responsible individual would not be interested in their own security [3].

As a social phenomenon, security culture is a sum of the security concerns of citizens and organizations within the state. A civilized country, based on democratic-liberal values, is defined by a higher level of citizen and organizational involvement in civic dialogue; therefore, in such a country, interest in developing a security culture may be greater.

Before 1990, security culture in Romania was a value imposed by communist leaders, with the specification that it was defined differently, as revolutionary vigilance and socialist ethics, through which each citizen of the state was formed with a “social conscious” communist. Faced with such a perspective, which was instilled in citizens from a very young age, it was expected that active individuals would not deviate from the prescriptions of the so-called “revolutionary conscience” [4].

After 1990, the construction of a security culture for free Romanians began. Firstly, through denial. None of the gimmicks of

the policies of the former communist state could constitute a serious concern as a risk to national or social security; Romania was changing. Denial at the individual level could manifest itself in the form of indifference, removing a public issue from the personal agenda, but not when the past haunted you. A certain social segment, bearer of civic consciousness, demanded in 1990 a lustration law, which aimed to normatively deny that the old communist gimmicks could ever represent a valid social or political value; based on such a law, those who were connected to the old politics could voluntarily disclose their complicity, or could be forced to do so, before playing a role in the new democratic society [5].

5. Security Culture, Directions of Evolution

Society, for the most part, understands today that national security begins with democracy and the rule of law. What does it mean today to have, as an individual, a culture of security (national)? Romanian society has evolved significantly from communist Romania; relationships have become more complex, balances are subtle and their negotiation involves multiple subjects, and politicians are obligated to take into account the desires of citizens or must be concerned with manipulating, positively or negatively, entire segments of society to stimulate support for their own programs.

For the citizen, simulating a sovereign disinterest in civic affairs no longer represents solutions, but rather anomalies of behavior, which at some point will have to be accounted for. Security culture finds its place among individual concerns, ascending levels of which not every citizen can always be conscious of: interest in one's own security and that of close family, interest in the security of the immediate community (religious, neighborhood, sexual orientation, ethnic, etc.), concern for the attribute of national security and sovereignty, understanding the complex

phenomena of globalization, concern for global security (equality among nations, cooperation between them, exclusion of terrorism or war from conflict resolution solutions, climate balances and environmental protection, etc.) and for the issues of humanity.

State specialized institutions have the obligation to be concerned with the formation of the security culture of citizens, because understanding the mechanisms for preserving national security to an individual level facilitates the mission; in the face of a security risk, the initiator(s) are one step ahead (the initiative belongs to them, they are the active factor) of the authorities, who can anticipate to prevent, but cannot truly take initiative and control the situation without public support.

Institutions do this, more or less coherently and professionally, as in the prevention of corruption or terrorist threats. To develop adequate reflexes, citizens need to perceive that they are part of a consolidated social phenomenon; namely, denouncing acts of corruption should not risk turning the honest citizen into a victim of the criminal group they denounced, and anti-terrorist vigilance should not lead to a dead end of behavior, where one suspects that behind every bearded individual with a backpack is a suicidal jihadist.

Security risks multiply and amplify, including characteristic phenomena of asymmetric conflicts, such as coordinated fake news campaigns by a state entity or a non-state actor, trafficking in human beings, entire categories of cyber risks, manipulation of markets for securities and goods, financing and control of political parties, non-governmental organizations, and media, which are difficult for the average citizen to understand and avoid – their manipulative influences being significant.

The nation cannot progress haphazardly and cannot have a future if it is led by politicians concerned only with their own well-being. Future generations will not have a future without quality education,

without adequate healthcare for all citizens, the nation needs a resilient economy, a quality environment, an armed force capable of deterring enemies, social cohesion, integrity leaders, culture, and must be concerned to prevent any action or inaction that would endanger collective security.

Society feels the need for effective security education policies and punctual collective initiatives. Such initiatives are welcome and respond to a specific social need. State institutions support them because national security is a value that is only appreciated when you are on the verge of losing it. Lessons from the past have left deep marks and the hope is that mistakes will not be repeated. It is mandatory to take measures and to form one's own security culture, to cultivate critical thinking and to refuse to vote for politicians indifferent to the security of the nation and the citizen.

6. Conclusions

Education is essential in the progress of a nation. Access to the leadership of the state by politicians lacking a solid educational background and an appropriate culture for the times we live in, concerned only with their own well-being, limits us and our descendants' access to a good future. High-performing schools, as well as the entire educational system, together with a modern and accessible healthcare system for all citizens, a resilient economy and a quality environment, armed forces to deter enemies, social cohesion, integrity leaders, culture, and a constant concern to prevent any action or inaction that would jeopardize collective security must be more than absolutely necessary objectives of current policies.

There is a need for articulated security education policies compensated today by specific collective initiatives. These are extremely valuable, responding to a specific social need.

The solution lies with those who lead the institutions and consists of a partnership with society, for the citizen, respecting the citizen. This is the immense role that

citizens with a high security culture have: to be critical, to put pressure on institutions, to come up with questions, and to request solutions. Citizens with a higher security

culture, active in civic engagement, are not able to be partners with institutions that cannot rise to their level. Institutions have to come up with solutions

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