

THE FACTORS AND MECHANISMS OF THE PRESERVATION AND AFFIRMATION OF THE SERBIAN STRATEGIC CULTURE

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The paper discusses the issue of preservation and affirmation of the Serbian strategic culture with the aim of identifying some of the key factors and mechanisms that influence its articulation. Since national culture represents a broader ideational basis of strategic culture, the example of the Serbian nation points to certain factors of national culture (literary heritage, history and geography) that define the access to the issues of the use of force and war. The focus of this paper is the issue of the affirmation of the Serbian strategic culture through social institutions, which, given their social role, have the greatest impact on the transfer of knowledge about the factors of strategic culture. In relation to various social institutions that have an impact on the education and behaviour of individuals, educational and media institutions have been emphasized as the key social subjects that influence the preservation and affirmation of strategic culture. The consideration of the role of these institutions also includes the presentation of the results of the research on the state of security culture among young people in the Republic of Serbia. The significance of this research results from the fact that, among other things, it provides insight into the attitudes of high school students regarding the contribution of educational and media institutions in understanding security issues.

Key words: *strategic culture, national culture, Serbian strategic culture*

Introduction

The introduction of a cultural perspective into the science of international relations began in the late 1970s, as a result of a critique of the dominant theoretical approach in the analysis of the Soviet and US nuclear doctrine at that

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time, presented in game theory. Jack L. Snyder opposes the abstract and acultural perspective of game theory to the concept of "strategic culture". This concept is based on the understanding that strategic thinking, and thus state military doctrines, are based on historical, organizational and political factors that represent the outcome of specific circumstances of the development of a state.¹ Accordingly, Snyder believed that both superpowers had a unique approach to strategy formulation, based on cultural characteristics. This is confirmed by his thesis that "neither the Soviet nor the US strategists are acultural and game theorists without prejudice."² This cultural perspective of international relations has not immediately taken off in science, but experienced its "maturation" on the margins of academic discourse, suppressed primarily by the neorealist vision of international politics.³ Only with the rise of social constructivism this concept has reached the centre of the academic discourse of the science of international relations. Alastair Ian Johnston states that the constructivist perspective of strategic culture is opposed to the ahistorical and so-called "objective" variables, in the form of material capacities and technology. These variables have secondary importance, primacy is given to the way they are perceived, which is defined by the "lenses" of strategic culture.⁴

Starting from the fact that national culture represents a broader ideational basis of strategic culture, the example of the Serbian nation points to certain factors of national culture (literary heritage, history and geography) that define the approach to the use of force and war. Identifying and analysing these factors enables an understanding of the way in which national culture "cultivates" the strategic thinking and actions of the Serbian nation. The focus of this paper is the issue of preserving and affirming the Serbian strategic culture through social institutions, which, given their social role, have the greatest impact on the transfer of knowledge about the factors of strategic culture. In relation to various social institutions that influence the education and behaviour of individuals, educational and media institutions have been singled out as the key social entities that influence the preservation and affirmation of strategic culture.

¹ Jack L. Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture. Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations*. RAND CORP, Vol. 2154. No. AF, 1977.

² Ibid, p. 6.

³ Kenneth Waltz views all states as functionally similar because they primarily strive for survival. The key difference he identifies between them is related to the amount of power each of them has within power distribution system. Namely, Waltz claims that system structure changes with the change in power distribution among system units. He thus identifies power distribution as a key variable that defines international politics. For him, power balance is a key pattern of international politics, which results in aspirations of all states to achieve security. In accordance with such assumptions, international politics is defined exclusively by the material capacities of states, which completely excludes the importance of cultural variables. See: Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Boston, 1979.

⁴ Alastair Ian Johnston, "Thinking about strategic culture." *International security*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 1995b.

Strategic culture

As stated, the basis of the concept of strategic culture is linked to Snyder's attempt to point out differences in the approach to nuclear doctrine immanent to Americans and Soviets. Snyder disputes the dominant position known as "technological determinism" at that time, whose proponents claim that the characteristics of nuclear weapons condition the same approach to the issue of their use.⁵ In contrast, he emphasizes that specific circumstances and factors of development of each nation cause differences in the development of nuclear doctrine. He believed that the Soviet strategic thinking is defined by specific historical and political circumstances, which shaped the framework and perspective of the analysis of foreign policy issues.⁶ This perspective that countries use to approach foreign policy characterizes strategic culture. This concept reflects the influence of cultural elements on perception, opinion and action in relation to threats to national security.

In defining the concept of strategic culture, Snyder states that "strategic culture can be defined as a total set of ideas, conditioned emotional responses and patterns of everyday behaviour that members of national strategic community have accumulated through training or imitation and share mutually in relation to nuclear strategy".⁷ Thus, the focus is on a set of attitudes and understandings that state and limit thought on strategic issues, influence the way they are formulated and set the discourse and conceptual parameters of "strategic debate". According to Snyder, foreign policy issues and problems are not analysed objectively, but are assessed through "the perceptual lenses" of strategic culture.⁸ Starting from the intellectual history of the Soviet strategic thought and feelings for the political and organizational context of defence decision-making, Snyder believes that this provides a basis for considering the Soviet positions on nuclear weapons.⁹ According to him, specific factors that have influenced the development of a nation greatly shape its strategic thinking and actions. Unique historical, political and cultural circumstances build a certain perspective of foreign policy (strategic culture), reflecting the values of national culture in the field of strategic thinking. The holder of strategic culture is nation, whose culture represents the fundamental ideational basis for the analysis of foreign policy processes and events.

After Snyder introduced the concept of strategic culture in the science of international relations, a period of increasingly intense academic discussion among representatives of this scientific discipline followed in an effort to predict its content. Alastair Johnston divided the conceptualization of strategic culture into "three

⁵ Jack L. Snyder, gen. quote.

⁶ Ibid, p. 7.

⁷ Ibid, p. 9.

⁸ Ibid, p. 8.

⁹ Ibid, p. 8.

generations” of authors. The first generation covers the late 1970s and is linked to Snyder and the Cold War nuclear rivalry between the Soviets and Americans. The second generation originated in the mid-1980s and is also focused on superpowers, but from Gramscian perspective. The focus of this generation is on the political and military elites and their instrumentalization of strategic culture in order to achieve their interests. And, finally, the third generation emerges in the 1990s, and is based on the positivist approach that aims to establish a clear cause-and-effect relationship between strategic culture and behaviour.¹⁰

Although Snyder made the term “strategic culture”, it does not play a central role in the approach of the first generation of authors. Colin S. Gray is the founder of this generation’s approach. His thesis that strategic culture provides a context for understanding behaviour (strategy) rather than an immediate cause is a key assumption for the first generation’s approach.¹¹ In defining the concept, Gray points out: “Strategic culture consists of socially constructed and transmitted assumptions, habits, traditions and preferred methods of action - that is, behaviour - that are more or less specific to a particular geographically based security community”.¹² According to Gray, the concept of strategic culture implies that different “security communities” (nations) think and act differently at a strategic level, while the importance of national culture results from the fact that it is a source of moral factors directly related to the nature and character of war.¹³ Analogous to Snyder’s and Gray’s understanding of strategic culture, Kerry Longhurst points out that this concept represents “a characteristic set of beliefs, attitudes and practice regarding the use of force that are nurtured by the collective and emerge gradually over time through a unique historical process.”¹⁴ Although he states that strategic culture reflects the approach of “the collective” (nation) in relation to the use of force, Longhurst singles out the political and military elites as the key holders of strategic culture. Therefore, he believes that in the analysis of strategic culture, it is necessary to focus on elites, while the public is viewed as a wider “contextual milieu”.¹⁵

The founder of the third generation’s approach, Alastair Johnston, approaches this concept through the prism of positivism, with the aim of establishing a cause-and-effect relationship between strategic culture (an independent variable) and behaviour (a dependent variable). He states that the outcome of strategic culture is

¹⁰ Alastair I. Johnston, *Cultural realism: Strategic culture and grand strategy in Chinese history*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1995.

¹¹ Colin S. Gray, „Strategic culture as context: the first generation of theory strikes back”, *Review of international studies*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 1999.

¹² Colin S. Gray, *Nuclear strategy and national style*, Hamilton Press, Maryland, 1986, p. 28.

¹³ Gray, Colin S. "Out of the wilderness: Prime time for strategic culture" in: Johnson, Jeannie L., Kerry M. Kartchner, and Jeffrey A. Larsen. *Strategic Culture and Weapons of Mass Destruction*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2009.

¹⁴ Kerry Longhurst, *Germany and the use of force*, Manchester University Press, 2018, p. 17.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 21.

national culture, especially emphasizing the importance of philosophical and literary heritage of a nation in shaping its "strategic preferences".¹⁶ Johnston states: "Strategic culture is an integrated 'system of symbols' (e.g. argumentation, structures, languages, analogies, metaphors) that works to establish ubiquitous and long-standing strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and effectiveness of the military force in interstate political issues and covers these concepts with such an aura of fact that strategic preferences seem uniquely realistic and effective".¹⁷ When it comes to the "object of analysis" when identifying strategic culture, Johnston emphasizes that it is necessary to pay attention to "decision-makers", i.e. "strategists, military leaders and the elite of national security".¹⁸

The aforementioned views point to the fact that strategic culture finds its outcome in national culture (history, geography, religion, literary heritage, philosophy, etc.) of a nation. This relation implies that strategic culture reflects the fundamental values of national identity in the field of foreign policy. Therefore, the preservation and affirmation of strategic culture that will reflect the fundamental interests and values of a nation appears as a fundamental precondition for accomplishing national security. The social community (nation) has been identified as the holder of strategic culture. However, when studying strategic culture, the authors mostly prefer the analysis of the social elites (political and military) in relation to the public. In accordance with the subject of this paper, which consists of considering the articulation of the Serbian strategic culture, it is necessary to identify the key factors of national culture related to security issues, as well as mechanisms that can "cultivate" them in society.

Social institutions as a mechanism of the articulation of strategic culture

Since most of the mentioned authors emphasize national culture as the outcome of strategic culture in their views, it is necessary to concretize the issue of articulation of the latter culture from its broader ideological basis. When it comes to national culture, Geert Hofstede defines national culture as "mental programming: a

¹⁶ Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking about strategic culture." *International security*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 1995a.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 15

¹⁸ According to Johnston, strategic culture as "a system of symbols" consists of main assumptions about the structure of the international environment, more precisely, about understanding the role of war in human relations. This segment of strategic culture is related to the assumption of war as an inherent characteristic of interstate relations or a phenomenon that can be overcome through cooperation. Then, strategic culture consists of assumptions concerning the character of other states, which are perceived as a friend or foe. And, finally, the last segment of strategic culture, according to Johnston, is related to the legitimacy of the use of force as a means of foreign policy. These three elements together make up the central paradigm of strategic culture. See: Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking about strategic culture." *International security*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 1995.

pattern of thoughts, feelings and actions that each person acquires in childhood and implements throughout life". According to Jančićević, "national culture can be defined as a set of assumptions, beliefs and values shared by members of a national community and which greatly define their understanding of the world, as well as behaviour in it". From the above definitions, the attitude results that national culture implies the shaping of individuals so that these beliefs, perceptions and values influence the shaping of relationships within community, while articulating the need for their formalization through a legal system. National culture sets the framework and provides guidelines when considering security issues, its conceptualization and operationalization.

The author Jeannie L. Johnson points out that strategic culture is defined by those factors of national culture that are related to the field of "security policy". She singles out four variables of national culture that affect security issues. These are identity (independence), values, rules and worldview. Johnson states that identity encompasses the way a nation perceives itself and its (national) character, as well as its regional and global roles. Values refer to material and/or ideational factors selected in relation to other factors in the cost-benefit analysis process, while rules are related to acceptable and expected patterns of behaviour. And, finally, worldview encompasses a view of the world created through beliefs (true or false) and experiences or lack of experiences. According to Jeannie Johnson, the sources of strategic culture include a wide range of factors of national culture (geography, history, religion, interaction with other nations, natural resources, etc.). All these elements form the basis of the previously mentioned variables that affect security policy of a nation.¹⁹ Thus, the mentioned variables reflect the influence of factors of national culture on the approach to foreign policy. Thus created approach to foreign policy, imbued with the cultural characteristics of a nation, maintains its strategic culture.

Regarding the influence of culture on behaviour, Peter Katzenstein points out that the cultural environment shapes the state of identity, which in turn influences behaviour. He also believes that the security environment is a part of the cultural and institutional environment, and not exclusively the material environment.²⁰ In essence, Katzenstein points out the social construction of security, which is viewed through the prism of culture. National culture, as the main determinant of national identity, defines the range of values that form the basis of survival and development of social community. As a result, given values are recognized as a fundamental interest of social community, which directs the behaviour of individuals and the entire community towards their "cultivation". As national culture is the source of strategic culture, the development of national awareness of fundamental cultural values

¹⁹ Jeannie L. Johnson, "Strategic culture: Refining the theoretical construct." *Defense Threat Reduction Agency Advanced Systems and Concepts Office*, 2006.

²⁰ Peter J. Katzenstein, *The culture of national security: Norms and identity in world politics*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1996.

appears as one of the fundamental preconditions for its preservation and affirmation. The recognition of the values that form the “core” of identity enables the development of awareness of members of a nation about the need and means of their protection.

Nurturing national culture implies the activities of different social institutions, which synergistically, but in different ways, each in its field, contribute to the development of (self) consciousness of the people. According to Stanarević, “every culture develops institutions for upbringing and education that transfer knowledge to members of a group/society which is important for the development, preservation and survival of such a group.” According to Stanarević, the institutions that influence education and behaviour of an individual in the key areas of social life are: a) family and network of social relations for reproduction and socialization; b) institutions in the field of education and training that should provide transferring and nurturing of knowledge, capabilities and specialized skills; c) institutions in the field of labour market and economy that should provide the production and distribution of goods and services; d) institutions in the field of rule of law, policies that should provide the maintenance of social order and stability and, finally, cultural, media and religious institutions, which should provide the development of the context of meaning, value orientations and symbolic codes.²¹ In relation to numerous institutions that influence education and behaviour of individuals, in the context of articulating strategic culture, the role of educational and media institutions will be presented. Their selection is based on the argument that they have the primary importance in creating knowledge and developing awareness of issues that fall within the domain of strategic culture.

The preservation and affirmation of strategic culture through education system

Education develops and strengthens the system of values and customs that a society strives to promote on all occasions. According to Stanarević, they further influence the choice of content that will give priority to the transfer of knowledge and means that they will use to accomplish those goals. In such a sense, national education system is one of the key factors in the development of security.²² Education has an important role in informing and forming children and youth, as active members of the community in which they live, and all subjects and the entire educational process should contribute to it. The subjects that are the holders of national symbols are mother tongue and literature, history, geography, and also the subjects dedicated to the cultural creativity of some national community. “These

²¹ Svetlana Stanarević, *Koncept bezbednosne kulture i pretpostavke njegovog razvoja*, gen. quote, p. 308.

²² Svetlana Stanarević, *Koncept bezbednosne kulture i pretpostavke njegovog razvoja*, gen. quote, p. 295.

subjects provide basic knowledge about the culture of the people they belong to, its history and geographical features of the territory in which one lives, and also the knowledge about other people and cultures". In addition to getting to know the cultural specifics of one's national community, it is desirable that these subjects direct students to understand and respect other nations, thus creating tolerance for differences arising from a different social environment.²³ As the mentioned subjects enable the knowledge of national culture, this implies that it is possible to articulate strategic culture simultaneously through them. However, in order to achieve this goal, it is necessary that the contents covered by these subjects have an appropriate security dimension. More precisely, it is necessary that these subjects, each in its own domain, provide the most basic knowledge related to security issues.

Bearing in mind the importance they have in creating awareness of cultural features, the subjects mother tongue and literature, history and geography will be analysed in the context of teaching content that influences the development of the Serbian strategic culture. The mother tongue and literature, as the subject, should point out the unique language and script, as well as the overall literary heritage of the Serbian nation. The literature of a nation represents a series of testimonies, which tell about important historical events, culture, tradition and mentality of a nation. Jovan Deretić points out that folk songs are the central segment of the Serbian oral literature; they are the most numerous and most fully express the spirit and character of a nation.²⁴ In the context of strategic culture, the literary texts that testify to certain historical events, personalities and dominant motives of the Serbian nation in the past are particularly important. Such literary texts include a wide opus of epic folk and artistic poetry. As Deretić points out, epics in its original sense includes narrative works in verse that deal with serious topics, sing about heroes, demigods or divine persons that the fate of a tribe, people or human race depends on. The Serbian oral epics cover the period from the reign of the Nemanjić dynasty to the liberation wars in the 19th century.²⁵ In that sense, the Serbian folk epic song includes a wide historical period from the founding of the medieval feudal state to the modern history of Serbia. It is precisely this historical dimension of the Serbian epics that makes it essential for the development of strategic culture because it implies the narration of the heroism and glory of the Serbian rulers and other historical figures. Deretić states that "the heroic age" in the Serbian epics is not limited to the period of the reign of Emperor Dušan and the Battle of Kosovo, but includes different epochs of the Serbian history, so the entire epics is a testimony to the heroic history of the Serbian nation. The Battle of Kosovo is a central event in the Serbian epic history, while the Christian component appears as an integral part of the Serbian history in epic songs.²⁶

²³ Ibid, pp. 302-303.

²⁴ Jovan Deretić, *Istorija srpske književnosti*, Prosveta, Beograd, 2004.

²⁵ Jovan Deretić, *Srpska narodna epika*. Filip Višnjić, Beograd, 2000.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 45.

The dominant topics and motives of the Serbian epics include the exploits of heroes and people themselves, as well as the ideals of justice and freedom together with the Christian elements. Owing to its historical dimension, the Serbian epics is one of the key factors of the national culture and identity of the Serbian nation. The motives that permeate various cycles of epic poetry are heroism, justice and solidarity of the Serbian nation in the struggle to preserve their identity and liberation from invaders. These ideals rooted in epic poetry represent an important segment of national identity, which is reflected in the approach to foreign policy practice in terms of defining the role of force and war. Therefore, the Serbian strategic culture is based on a deep-rooted belief that resistance and use of force is considered a legitimate means in relation to other states that have conquering or any other aggressive intentions. The central motive of epic poetry, which forms the basis of the Serbian identity, is the motive of heroic suffering and sacrifice for the defence of freedom. This motive is originally related to the Battle of Kosovo, and finds its reaffirmation through later historical epochs and events. Solidarity and unity of the people in difficult times indicate a strong will to free oneself from subjugation to invaders and a primordial desire for freedom. Thus, epic poetry as an essential element of the Serbian national identity articulates the motives of heroism, sacrifice, justice and freedom as an ideational basis of strategic culture.

In addition to epic poetry, lyric folk and artistic poetry has a significant role in strengthening national awareness and identity. According to Deretić, „the learned or school poetry” developed during the 17th century. In addition to songs that celebrate historical figures, or are related to religious and moral topics, the most important place is occupied by patriotic songs. This type of lyric artistic poetry is characterized by a strong historical feeling; the Serbian poets try to point out that Serbs are not the nation without history. The most famous and most valuable patriotic songs are created under the auspices of romanticism. At that time, Branko Radičević, Jovan Jovanović Zmaj, Đura Jakšić and Laza Kostić wrote. Then, the second “golden age” of patriotic poetry occurs during modern times, when Laza Kostić, Aleksa Šantić, Jovan Dučić and Milutin Bojić wrote.²⁷ This type of lyric poetry exudes the feelings of pride, love and empathy towards the Serbian nation and its history of struggle and suffering, which reaffirms the topics and motives of epic poetry. This type of lyric poetry and the capital works of these authors play an essential role in the development of patriotism. From the perspective of strategic culture, this type of lyric poetry is full of topics and motives analogous to epic poetry, which means that it ideologically shapes the collective awareness of struggle and warfare as sacred duties in case of threats to homeland. Celebrating the Serbian sacrifice and suffering, patriotic poetry sets the ideals of heroism and freedom as the foundation of the Serbian strategic culture.

In addition to mother tongue and literature, the subjects history and geography have an important role in the development of strategic culture of a nation. Their role is based on providing knowledge about the position of their nation in different

²⁷ Jovan Deretić, Jovan. *Istorija srpske književnosti*, Prosveta, Beograd, 2004.

historical epochs in relation to other countries and historical events. In such a sense, the subject geography should provide basic knowledge regarding the geographical characteristics of Serbia, and also the characteristics of the territories of other nations in the immediate or distant neighbourhood. Milomir Stepić points out that “for the Serbian strategic culture, especially for its geopolitical aspects, it is of paramount importance to return the concept of the Serbian land to everyday functioning. At the same time, it is necessary to instil their true dimensions and landmarks - mountains, rivers, smaller areas, original toponyms, capitals, fortresses, monasteries, old towns, archeological sites, sites of important battles, places of historical decision-making in collective mental pictures...”²⁸ Therefore, the contents covered by this subject resulting in the development of strategic culture are the characteristics of state borders, the main traffic and trade routes, as well as natural resources in national territory. Furthermore, it is necessary that certain parts of national territory are particularly highlighted, due to their historical and cultural significance for the Serbian nation. Curricula in geography should indicate the specifics of geographical position in relation to other geographical areas. In addition, insight into the main geographical characteristics of other countries provides a necessary perspective for understanding needs and interests of other countries and factors that influence their foreign policy thinking and actions. In this way, it is possible to identify the main weaknesses and strengths of national territory in its strategic sense in relation to other states and the characteristics of their territories.

In addition to basic knowledge in the field of geography, curricula in history are also important for the development of strategic culture. This subject should include an overview of the entire history of the Serbian nation, from the establishment of the medieval feudal country to the present day. Curricula included in this subject, which contribute to the development of strategic culture, are related primarily to the relation between the Serbian nation and other nations through different historical epochs. In addition to the medieval Serbian country, which is the foundation of the Serbian statehood, there are important periods of the Ottoman occupation, the period of insurgent struggle, as well as the period of regaining independence. The periods of the Balkan wars, as well as the First and Second World War are particularly important from the modern history of Serbia. It is necessary that the relations between the Serbian and other nations at that time are presented in the given historical context. The struggle of the Serbian nation in the two world wars on the side of the Entente Powers and the allied forces indicates the strategic orientation of the Serbian nation to resistance and fight against more powerful invaders. Moreover, the great suffering during the First and Second World War reaffirms the motives and ideals of heroism, sacrifice and freedom at the core of the Serbian strategic culture. The relations with different nations throughout history represent an important framework for understanding current relations, given that the past mainly appears as a *sine qua non* condition in the development of current relations. In that sense, good

²⁸ Milomir Stepić, Geopolitički temelji srpske strateške kulture, *Vojno delo*, No. 8, 2019, p. 173.

knowledge of history enables the knowledge and analysis of one's strategic culture. This provides insight into the characteristics of strategic culture of other countries and their position in relation to important historical events.

Insight into the contribution of educational institutions in terms of articulation of strategic culture, as well as the current state of its development, will be gained by presenting the results of the research conducted by Bodin, Radojević and Kesić, entitled "The state of national security culture among young people in the Republic of Serbia".²⁹ Before reviewing the results of this research, it is necessary to specify the relationship between the concepts of strategic and security culture, in order to point out that the latter culture is a relevant indicator of strategic culture. For this purpose, the definition of security culture by Marian Cieślarczyk will be used. He connects security and defence culture, viewing them as a kind of social matrix, i.e. "a pattern for main assumptions, values, norms, rules, symbols and beliefs that affect the perception of challenges, opportunities and threats, and the way security is felt and thought about, as well as the behaviour and activities of individuals or community".³⁰ Thus, Cieślarczyk's definition emphasizes that the basis of security culture is values, norms and rules, which define the approach to security issues and guide the behaviour of individuals and community. Therefore, security culture as an approach to security issues is manifested through opinion and action, at an individual and national level. This national level draws an analogy with strategic culture because it encompasses the perception and action of social community (nation) in relation to security threats and challenges. On the other hand, an individual level is related to opinions and behaviour of individuals in the field of security in relation to various forms of security threats. Such a defined concept of security culture represents a kind of operationalization of strategic culture because beliefs, attitudes and rules from a strategic level are transferred directly to the field of social community, and also individual life of citizens. Therefore, strategic culture is a broader concept that integrates security culture, which appears as a specific and concrete form of approach to security issues of a community and its members.

The conceptual paradigm set in this way enables the research on the state of security culture among young people in the Republic of Serbia to be used as an indicator of the development of strategic culture. For the purpose of this paper, the results of the research related to the attitudes of young people about the contribution of school in the prevention

²⁹ The research provides insight into the attitudes of high school students, aged 16 to 19, about phenomena and subjects that affect prevention or endangerment of security. Furthermore, the research included issues related to general security situation, the impact of education on understanding of security issues, as well as the way of informing young people about security issues. See: Milenko M. Bodin, Kristina Z. Radojević i Dušan B. Kesić, Stanje nacionalne bezbednosne kulture kod mladih u Republici Srbiji, *Sociološki pregled*, Vol. 53, No. 2, 2019.

³⁰ Marian Cieślarczyk, *Kultura bezpieczeństwa i obronności*. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Przyrodniczo-Humanistycznego, 2010, p. 210.

of security threats and knowledge of security issues are particularly important.³¹ According to high school students, schools contribute to a small extent (28%) or medium (34%) to the prevention of threats. Similar attitudes are shared by high school students in relation to the school's contribution to the knowledge of security issues. The greatest number of respondents expressed the opinion that education affected the knowledge in this field to medium (36%) or a small extent (27%).³² In addition to closed questions, the questionnaire also contained an open-ended question, intended to express personal views, opinions and recommendations regarding possibilities of improving the security situation in the Republic of Serbia. Among other things, in response to this question, the respondents suggested improving security education and developing an awareness of security issues among citizens. The authors state that the respondents do not recognize their role or the role of citizens' associations in improving security situation, which indicates a relatively low level of the development of security culture.³³ The results of the research indicate an analogy of the attitudes of high school students regarding the contribution of education at a proactive level. The respondents believe that education system does not have a significant impact on the understanding of security issues, as well as the prevention of security threats. This is a serious problem because education appears as an essential mechanism for articulating strategic culture within the social community. Therefore, it is necessary to make adequate changes to curriculum through the introduction of subjects that will address security issues or innovate curricula of some subjects with security topics. At the same time, a low level of the development of security culture can be taken as a reliable indicator of the state of strategic culture. This means that there is no satisfactory level of knowledge and understanding of one's own characteristics that define the approach to the use of force and war, and also the power and intentions of other actors in the foreign policy arena. One of the factors that hinders the articulation of coherent strategic culture of the social community, particularly its younger generations, is related to the existence of various textbooks and publishers in the Republic of Serbia. Namely, many textbooks neither guarantee quality nor they ensure adequate (expected) formation of young people's awareness of the important historical events and personalities of the Serbian nation.

The influence of the media on the articulation of strategic culture

In relation to social institutions that influence the education and behaviour of individuals, in addition to presenting the role of institutions in the field of education, this paper will also address the impact of media institutions. With the advent of electronic

³¹ Respondents expressed their views on the questions in the questionnaire on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 - not at all; 2 - to a small extent; 3 - medium; 4 - to a large extent; 5 - exceptional). See: Milenko M. Bodin, Kristina Z. Radojević i Dušan B. Kesić, Stanje nacionalne bezbednosne kulture kod mladih u Republici Srbiji, *Sociološki pregled*, Vol. 53, No. 2, 2019.

³² *Ibid*, p. 634.

³³ *Ibid*, p. 634.

media, radio and television, and then the internet, a revolution in the way of informing the public has started. The importance of electronic media confirms that they are becoming one of the strongest agents of socialization. Kenneth Thompson states that they provide young people with ready-made models of behaviour by affirming some and disavowing others. Thompson points out that former fairy tales have been largely replaced by cartoons that contain the same archetypal heroes and situations that were once conveyed through fairy tales or stories for children.³⁴ Therefore, the role of the media in the development of security culture is becoming increasingly important, so it can be discussed that they enjoy an equally important role as education system. The justification of such a thesis is based on the fact that the vast majority of people rely on information obtained through electronic media in forming opinions about the situation in many fields of social life. On the other hand, young people, as the main target group in the development of security culture, are predominantly informed via the internet.³⁵ Steve Chibnaill points out that the media is a central source of people's knowledge; they have the power to create problems and define the boundaries of debates. Their influence on people's opinions and attitudes is not manifested in a direct way, but by creating new attitudes and changing old one, one influences a gradual change in the way of thinking. The media provide interpretation, symbols of identification, collective values and myths that are capable of overcoming cultural boundaries in societies.³⁶ Thus, they have the ability to create public opinion, which makes them a crucial factor in the development of awareness, knowledge and values that fall within the domain of strategic culture.

Exactly this "power" of the media to create public opinion makes them a suitable subject for the development of strategic culture. As in the example of education system, the development of strategic culture through the media has to be focused on the presentation of the content that encourages public awareness of their history, tradition and culture, and also the characteristics of other nations. Stanarević states that the contents of national culture should be presented through the media in a way that contributes to its promotion and development by transferring the accumulated knowledge and values. He also believes that "mass communication means are managed by managers of certain profiles and with special expertise, but who have to be aware at all times...of the need to improve their programmes, columns and sites with educational content that sends messages of peace, tolerance, respect for others and different, warnings about what can hurt, make sick, manipulate or 'seduce'".³⁷ The promotion of the values of national culture through the media

³⁴ Kenet Tompson, *Moralna panika*, Clio, Beograd, 2003.

³⁵ The results of the research on the state of national security culture in the Republic of Serbia from 2019 show that high school students are mostly (58%) informed about security issues via the internet, followed by television (30%) as the second main source of information. See: Milenko M. Bodin, Kristina Z. Radojević i Dušan Kesić, *Stanje nacionalne bezbednosne kulture kod mladih u Republici Srbiji*, Sociološki pregled, Vol. 53, No. 2, 2019.

³⁶ Steve Chibnaill, *Law and Order News: An analysis of crime reporting in the British Press*, Tavistock Publications, London, 1977.

³⁷ Svetlana Stanarević, gen. quote, p. 304.

enables clearer knowledge of one's identity and values that affirm it. The spectrum of these values also includes the understanding of the role of war and force in interstate relations, i.e. the way in which the people have approached foreign policy throughout history and what role war has had within the given approach. At the same time, it is necessary to provide an overview of relations with other countries and their approach to foreign policy in the context of the use of force.

The importance of media institutions in terms of informing about security issues is confirmed by the already mentioned research on the state of security culture among young people in the Republic of Serbia. According to the results of the research, high school students are primarily informed about security issues via the internet (58%), while the second most important source of information is television (30%). Furthermore, the questionnaire included questions about the impact of the media on security situation, in terms of their contribution to prevention, and also the impact on security threats. The majority of the respondents (39%) identified the media as an entity that has a significant impact on security threats. On the other hand, within the question of subjects that contribute to the prevention of threats, high school students classified the media into a group of subjects that have a significant impact. This indicates the contradictory role of the media towards the attitudes of high school students regarding the impact on security situation.³⁸ This contradiction becomes particularly significant when we take into account the fact that electronic media are the main way of informing high school students. Therefore, it is necessary to recognize the importance of the media in the promotion of content that encourages the development of strategic culture. The fact that electronic media are the primary way of informing young people about security issues means that these media have to be the backbone of the promotion of the content that creates awareness and knowledge of issues that fall within the domain of strategic culture.

The influence of the media on public opinion is not exclusively beneficial, and can also have a negative effect on public opinion about some social phenomena. One of the key problems that arises in this field is the deviation of the media from their fundamental role, which involves timely and truthful informing the public about relevant social issues. The spectrum of these issues includes security phenomena, both current and those that form a part of national history. When it comes to current security phenomena, perhaps the best example is the phenomenon of crime. Ray Surette points out that for most people, the main source of information about crime is "the distorted reality" provided by mass media. Crime news focus on violent crime, murder, rape and assault, while property crime, theft and burglary are ignored.³⁹ In addition, Chris Greer states that one of the shortcomings in the

³⁸ Milenko M. Bodin, Kristina Z. Radojević i Dušan B. Kesić, Stanje nacionalne bezbednosti kulture kod mladih u Republici Srbiji, gen. quote. 634.

³⁹ Ray Surette, *Media, crime, and criminal justice: Images and realities*. Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, California, 1992.

presentation of crime is the omission of the issue of cause, prevention or control policy.⁴⁰ In essence, the media approach to the phenomenon of crime, and also most other security phenomena, neglects essential issues important for security, and these are precisely the issues of cause, proactive and reactive action in the event of a threat. These issues should be thematized through the media in order to work on the development of security culture of citizens in relation to the phenomenon of crime. Of course, identical practice is necessary in relation to other security phenomena.

Media discourse is not only deprived of the content that forms the basis of establishing security culture, but also abounds in news that influence the adoption of wrong attitudes in relation to security phenomena. This practice causes the degradation of security culture, i.e. strategic culture as its integral part. In this way, the media mislead the public about the real situation and degree of vulnerability of a society to various threats. This problem also occurs on the example of the presentation of the media content that affects the articulation of strategic culture. Namely, by selective and biased choice of facts about current or past events and relations between countries, the media encourage the creation of public opinion that does not reflect the real state of affairs. The public opinion thus created is based on fragmentary facts, which is an obstacle to objective analysis and attitude towards specific events. Therefore, the media content on television should have an unambiguous educational role, which would enable the improvement or renewal of basic knowledge acquired through educational institutions. Moreover, the way of presenting these contents should be harmonized with "the spirit of the time" and younger generations as the key subjects, who should adopt and nurture knowledge and values that reflect strategic culture. The subjects mother tongue and literature, history and geography provide basic guidelines for creating media content important for the development of strategic culture. The synergy of educational and media institutions is a reliable way to articulate knowledge, beliefs and attitudes that reflect developed strategic culture.

Concluding remarks

In relation to various social institutions that represent the mechanism of the preservation and affirmation of strategic culture, this paper presents the influence of educational and media institutions. The selection of these institutions and the thematization of their role is based on the fact that they are of paramount importance in the transfer of knowledge and the development of an awareness of issues that fall within the domain of strategic culture. The role of education system is to "cultivate" young people. The subjects mother tongue and literature, history and geography

⁴⁰ Chris Greer, *Sex crime and the media*, Willan, London, 2012.

should transfer the basic knowledge and values necessary for the development of strategic culture. On the example of these subjects and their curricula, some key factors of the Serbian strategic culture have been emphasized. Special emphasis has been put on literary heritage, epic and lyric poetry. The central position of epic literature in the Serbian culture and tradition conditions that its dominant motives form the foundation of strategic culture. These are the motives of heroism, justice and freedom, created in the long history of the struggle of the Serbian nation for the preservation of its identity and liberation from invaders. Therefore, the Serbian strategic culture is based on a deep-rooted belief that resistance and the use of force is considered a legitimate means in relation to other states that have conquering or any aggressive intentions. The central motive of epic poetry that forms the “core” of the Serbian identity is the motive of heroic suffering, which is originally related to the Battle of Kosovo, and finds its reaffirmation through later historical epochs. In addition to mother tongue and literature, the subjects of geography and history should also nurture and promote the Serbian national culture in the direction of its “transformation” into strategic culture.

The review of the research on the state of security culture among young people in the Republic of Serbia has served as a suitable illustration of problems and challenges that arise when articulating strategic culture. Namely, although educational institutions have been identified as a key entity that should contribute to the preservation and affirmation of strategic culture, the research results indicate that they do not fulfill their role to a sufficient extent. The majority of the respondents believe that education has a small or medium impact on the understanding of security issues and the prevention of security threats. Such results imply the need for a systemic change in the approach to establishing strategic culture. This can be accomplished through changes in curriculum, the introduction of subjects that are directly related to this issue, or innovating curricula of individual subjects with security topics. In addition, the results of the research show that electronic media are the main way of informing high school students about security issues. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize the role of the media in the promotion of the content that encourages the development of strategic culture.

A low level of the development of the Serbian strategic culture implies the need to create a comprehensive approach to this problem. The backbone of this approach should be the synergy of institutions in the field of education and media, precisely because of its dominant influence on the knowledge, opinion and attitudes of young people. The need for the affirmation of strategic culture arises from the fact that this concept finds its result in national culture, which means that strategic culture reflects the values of national identity in the field of foreign policy thinking and actions. Thus, strategic culture appears as an essential precondition for achieving national security because it “cultivates” main national interests and values through an appropriate approach to foreign policy.

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Чиниоци и механизми очувања и афирмације српске стратешке културе

У раду се разматра питање очувања и афирмације српске стратешке културе са циљем да се идентификују неки од кључних чинилаца и механизма који утичу на њену артикулацију. Како национална култура представља ширу идеациону основу стратешке културе, на примеру српског народа указано је на поједине чиниоце националне културе (литерарно наслеђе, историју и географију) који одређују приступ питањима употребе силе и рата. Када су у питању друштвене институције које утичу на образовање и понашање појединца, а самим тим и на очување и афирмацију стратешке културе према критеријуму доприноса у овој области, образовне и медијске институције су најзначајније. Стога, предмет овог рада је представљање начина артикулације ових чинилаца српске стратешке културе путем образовних и медијских институција. Разматрање улоге ових институција укључује и представљање резултата истраживања о стању безбедносне културе код младих у Републици Србији. Значај овог истраживања проистиче из чињенице да, између осталог, пружа увид у ставове средњошколаца о доприносу образовних и медијских институција у спознаји безбедносне проблематике.

Кључне речи: *стратешка култура, национална култура, српска стратешка култура*