

PEACE AND SECURITY

PERSPECTIVES OF SOCIETAL SECURITY IN GEORGIA

Ivane Abramashvili
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Security policy planning and inter-agency coordination in Georgia are flawed due to the state's unsystematic approach, the obsolescence of national security conceptual documents, and the inadequate political and institutional support of the National Security Council.



Despite the improved rules of procedure, parliamentary oversight and control over the security sector in Georgia remains weak due to the low priority of security-related topics in the Georgian political space, the weakness of institutional and political traditions, and various technical concerns.



In Georgia, as in many other political processes, the role of local governments in the security sphere is limited. Beyond general structural factors, real decentralization is hampered by fears of weakening central control over regions, especially by security services, where a strong traditional understanding of security and a high degree of centralization are prevalent.

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Executive Summary

This study introduces the lesser-known concept of ‘societal security’ to the Georgian discussion space. Societal security is best explained using the broad definition of Copenhagen-based researcher Ole Wæver: it concerns “the ability of a society to persist under changing conditions and possible and actual threats.”

Over the last thirty years, the societal security model has undergone a rather complex path of development that has been closely linked to the Nordic region in terms of its practical use. Despite the high level of development of this region, societal security is not relevant only to rich countries but offers many advantages to developing countries as well. In particular, a broader understanding of security, advancing the role of society in it, strengthening the social welfare component in security, and decentralization can be promising for Georgia, which has had to deal with a broad spectrum of threats since regaining independence. This research examines this perspective and analyzes its relevance for Georgia.

Key Findings:

Societal Security Concept

- Societal security, as an academic theory and as a form of security governance, emphasizes the importance of wider public participation in security processes. It is based on the whole-of-society model in security policy. This requires each group of the society, based on its ability, knowledge, and experience, to participate in security processes and take responsibility for the continuous performance of assigned functions, even in crisis situations.
- The concept of societal security incorporates a wide range of threat containment mechanisms and is effective in curbing threats from both state and non-state actors. In this process, societal security is not an alternative to military defense, but its complementary component as one of the pillars of national security and an effective tool for deterring modern threats.
- Societal security has grown from the fundamental demands of society and brought its two main priorities - security and prosperity - closer together. In this process, the Welfare State Model has become an instrument not only for the prevention and containment of socio-economic problems but also for the security challenges arising from them, as it provides effective means for bridging public gaps and ensuring social stability.
- Another positive aspect of societal security is that the concept is characterized by a high degree of decentralization in the process of planning and implementing security policy. This allows it to bypass the protracted decision-making process and bureaucratic vertical hierarchy in times of crisis. It is based on a horizontal model of action in which, instead of traditional command and control, the emphasis is on increasing rights and responsibilities at the local level and strengthening the coordination system.
- Although societal security is an effective tool for deterring modern threats, its introduction in developing countries is fraught with difficulties. It requires high responsibility, trust, readiness, and engagement from society. At the same time, public consensus, coherence, and solidarity are needed for its full functioning.

Key Findings: Societal Security in the Georgian Context

- Analysis of the study data indicates that, at this stage, the identification of clear mechanisms for adapting the societal security model to the Georgian context is associated with many difficulties. However, despite these difficulties, due to the diversity of threats facing the Georgian state and society, the need for the introduction of a societal security model is clear.
- According to study respondents, the main threats to Georgian statehood are Russian occupation, economic weakness, and the level of inadequate development of state institutions. The main challenges to public security are poverty, unemployment, emigration, and social and political polarization.
- Security policy planning and inter-agency coordination in Georgia are flawed due to the state's unsystematic approach, the obsolescence of national security conceptual documents, and the inadequate political and institutional support of the National Security Council.
- Despite the improved rules of procedure, parliamentary oversight and control over the security sector in Georgia remains weak due to the low priority of security-related topics in the Georgian political space, the weakness of institutional and political traditions, and various technical concerns.
- In Georgia, as in many other political processes, the role of local governments in the security sphere is limited. Beyond general structural factors, real decentralization is hampered by fears of weakening central control over regions, especially by security services, where a strong traditional understanding of security and a high degree of centralization are prevalent.
- Civil and academic society is inadequately involved in the development and implementation of the security policy due to the field's elitism, weak cooperation between state and society, and the backwardness of academic security policy research.
- Participation of the private sector in security policy implementation remains limited in Georgia. In this context, the alienation between the private sector and society, which began in the 1990s and resulted in inertia, had a significant impact on public confidence in business and on defining its place in the social and political life of the country, including security policymaking.
- According to study respondents, poverty and social inequality are associated with significant threats in Georgia. The threats posed by poverty in the Georgian reality include the decline of human capital, the weakening of the democratic system, the strengthening of emigration, the decline of the citizens' fighting capacity, the growing sense of insecurity, the hindered development of the defense forces, the vulnerability to propaganda and misinformation, and the increased risk of radicalization.
- Threats related to social inequality in Georgia include fragmentation of society, increased risk of confrontation within society, weakened role of the state as the main unifying institution, and decreased public confidence in the defense forces in the long run.
- The study found that the securitization of poverty and inequality is almost non-existent in the Georgian political reality. This is directly related to the strength of the traditional security paradigm in political and academic circles, the dominance of neoliberal economic ideology, and the deficit of preventive policies.

Introduction

Large-scale geopolitical, socio-political, and economic changes caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union, the end of the Cold War, accelerated globalization, and rapid information-technological development have had a major impact on the international security environment. The line between internal and external threats, as well as the state of war and peace, has blurred. The range of non-traditional and non-military threats and challenges that do not pose an existential threat to the country's existence and territorial integrity but challenge proper functioning of state and society and their stability, have increased significantly.

The new reality has changed the nature of the threats themselves and has affected the perception of security. Gradually, the traditional, militaristic view of security eroded, and economic, social, cultural, and value-based factors emerged in the process of planning and implementing international or national security policies. This period coincides with the beginning of rethinking traditional security policies in Western countries, which intensified after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The security environment has become even more complex with the 'return' of geopolitics to international politics over the past decade and the launch of a new wave of conventional threats that did not occur at the expense of reducing non-military threats. On the contrary, the emergence of a combination of conventional and non-conventional threats poses new types of hybrid threats pushing states to develop appropriate approaches.

New types of threats that focus on disrupting public institutions, distorting values, and manipulating attitudes, increase the vulnerability of countries with small, open societies. In such a situation, states find it increasingly difficult to deal with threats alone in an old-fashioned way, as traditional, military methods of defense are often powerless to contain such threats without great civil support. Consequently, in the process of rethinking security policy, vital importance was given not only to protecting the public but also to actively participating in the planning and implementation of security by a wider society. Interesting in this regard is the concept of societal security, which while underlining a unified public approach to security, emphasizes the need for close cooperation between state and society.

The ultimate goal of societal security is for society to acquire the ability to resist hybrid threats and learn to adapt to a changing security environment which requires a broader and more democratic vision of security. That is why planning and implementing security policy must pay great attention to socio-economic issues, decentralization of security, involvement of a wide range of community groups, and increasing the degree of democracy in this area. In addition, societal security has transcended the fundamental needs of society and brought its two main priorities - security and prosperity - closer together. Together, these principles formulate a model of societal security that enables successful deterrence of modern threats.

Societal security is also highly relevant to Georgia, which as a small country with limited resources must also deal with a complex geopolitical environment and internal challenges. Growing hybrid threats require more and more efforts by the state to protect its society and strengthen its statehood. In this situation, the adaptation to an inclusive and holistic security model is becoming more and more urgent to allow state and society to jointly contain existential threats.

Although societal security is considered a progressive concept and interest in it is growing, it is important to assess the feasibility of adapting the above model of security management to the Georgian reality. Given that societal security is based on a common public vision and emphasizes the importance of public resilience, coherence, and active involvement in planning and implementation of security policy, part of this study focuses on identifying the factors that prevent public engagement in security policymaking in Georgia. To understand the full picture, the analytical portion identifies the main threats facing Georgia and assesses the institutional peculiarities. However, the study's main purpose is to determine the extent to which socio-economic challenges hinder development of a unified public approach to Georgian security as the study will clearly demonstrate that poverty and social inequality constitute a security challenge.

The connection between security and welfare policy in modern discourse led the study to focus on socio-economic factors. Therefore, one aim of this study is to demonstrate that poverty and social inequality, which have weakened and fragmented Georgian society over the past three dec-

ades, require special attention not only in economic or socio-political terms but also in terms of security. Consequently, it will be very difficult for the Georgian state to protect society and deal with modern threats and challenges without drastically improving the well-being of the population.

This research will allow the target audience to become acquainted with the societal security model and assess its prospects in Georgia. In this context, the study is the first attempt to consider the urgency of societal security in the Georgian context. It also will introduce into academic or analytical discourse a topic that has been one of the most important issues for European countries and EU security policy for several decades. In addition, from an academic point of view, this study should arouse interest in young people and create a precondition for a more thorough study of the issue.

Methodology and Structure

The paper uses qualitative research methods, in the frames of which semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with twenty respondents.¹ Their identities are not disclosed, although they are competent experts in security policy. Respondents were selected based on their knowledge, experience, public activism, and impartiality. To see the issue from a broader perspective, civil servants employed in the executive and legislative structures, as well as politicians, analysts from non-governmental and research organizations, academics, and journalists were selected as respondents.

Structurally, the study consists of two main parts. The first part includes a theoretical overview of societal security, which focuses on the concept's relevance, its development history, and a brief assessment of its successful international experience. The research pays special attention to the theoretical discussion of societal security because of the novelty of the concept in Georgia. It is the in-depth knowledge of the main societal security principles that enable the reader to correctly understand the importance of the inclusive security model, particularly as the analytical part of the research applies to Georgia, and to understand the magnitude of threats coming from poverty or social inequality.

The second part of the research is based on respondents' perceptions and observations, strategic documents, and reports from international organizations. These will assess the perspective of introducing societal security in Georgia. The analytical part of the study is divided into three chapters, with the first dedicated to identifying the main threats facing the Georgian state and society in the eyes of the respondents and their brief overview. The second chapter discusses challenges that hinder development of inclusive and holistic security policymaking in Georgia. The third chapter focuses on analysis of the threats directly posed by poverty and social inequality and the factors that impede their securitization.

¹ See Appendix 1.

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SOCIETAL SECURITY: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretically, the definition of societal security is not completely agreed upon, allowing for a broad interpretation of the concept. As a result, societal security does not have one internationally recognized definition, and any definition has changed over time and within countries and international organizations since the 1990s.² In addition, the complexity of societal security is enhanced by its close connection and intersection with the concepts of resilience and hybrid threats. This gives the concept some ambiguity and raises additional questions in related discussions, but at the same time, in a constantly changing security environment, allows for more adaptation and transformation. Societal security is the fruit of an evolutionary, rather than a revolutionary, revision of the traditional security vision, resulting in the gradual and time-consuming nature of its development.³ Given that societal security deconstructs traditional Cold War security theories, blurs the boundaries between security and crisis management, and focuses on individual actors through innovative approaches, it is known as the ‘post-modern approach to security.’

Since the end of the Cold War, while rethinking traditional security approaches, attention has been focused on a wide range of new threats that do not pose an existential threat to the country’s existence or its territorial integrity but instead challenge the proper functioning and stability of state and society. Consequently, there was a demand for a security conceptualization that allowed open Western societies to avoid vulnerability and develop resilience in the face of hybrid and changing threats. These requirements were met by the concept of societal security, which encompasses a wide range of threats and combines elements of prevention, resilience, crisis management, and self-reliance to contain them. In addition to the military-political dimension in the development and implementation of security policy, it also considers aspects of democratization, human rights, ecology, social protection, and economic prosperity. At the same

time, the focus is not only on military and/or political threats but also on the socio-economic challenges that make the state and society vulnerable to various types of threats.

Societal security, as a model of security governance, integrates security policy planning and enforcement, threat identification, and response/preparedness systems, which improves capabilities for early warning, risk assessment, planning, training, stockpiling, infrastructure maintenance, awareness-raising, crisis management, resilience enhancement, recovery, and reconstruction.⁴ Consequently, the concept incorporates a wide range of threat containment mechanisms and is effective in curbing threats from both state and non-state actors and in minimizing damage caused by natural disasters.

In addition, according to the concept of societal security, focus is on increasing prevention, response, and recovery capabilities to address both expected and unforeseen threats.⁵ Accordingly, it combines two interdependent directions, both with a strong preventive character. These interdependent directions include reducing the country and society’s vulnerability by identifying and neutralizing threat causes while increasing resilience and preparedness to unpredictable or unavoidable threats.⁶ In the first direction, the goal is to make it difficult for an adversary to find weaknesses in the form of infrastructural deficiencies, vulnerable groups, or sensitive topics, while in the second direction, the task is to minimize damage from the attack and to enact a quick recovery when threats cannot be contained.

The principle emphasized by societal security that society has the ability or can develop the ability to deal with threats directly coincides with the core idea of resilience, revealing a certain conceptual ambiguity. Often, they are perceived as parallel approaches to security, but in reality, societal secu-

2 Burgess, J. Peter & Sissel Haugdal Jore (2008) *The Influence of Globalization on Societal Security: The International Setting*, PRIO Policy Brief, 3. Oslo: PRIO. p. 2

3 Larsson, S., & Rhinard, M. (2021). *Conclusion: Convergence and Divergence in Nordic Societal Security*. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 225-235). New York: Routledge. p. 228.

4 Bailes, A. (2008). *What Role for the Private Sector in ‘Societal Security’?* Brussels: The European Policy Centre. p. 13

5 Rhinard, M. (2007). *Societal Security: An Emerging Role for the European Union*. In A. Missiroli, *Building Societal Security in Europe: the EU’s role in Managing Emergencies* (pp. 8-22). Brussels: European Policy Center. p. 14

6 Burgess, J. P., & Mouhle, N. (2007). *Societal Security: Definitions and Scope for the Norwegian Setting*. Oslo: International Peace Research Institute.

ity is a broader concept and resilience is one of its components. According to the concept of resilience, some threats cannot be prevented, so it is important to prepare communities and institutions to stand up to, minimize damage, and/or recover quickly from natural or man-made challenges.⁷ However, the concept of resilience often underscores the inevitability of threats that could be avoided and prevented. It is therefore advisable that resilience within a country's security policy should not be an independent, fragmented concept but part of a broader approach. This is why societal security, along with resilience, integrates prevention, crisis management, and risk assessment systems while maintaining a balance among them.⁸

Societal security, as an academic theory and a form of security governance, emphasizes the importance of wider public participation in security processes. Security must be delegated and decentralized, with a certain proportion of responsibilities distributed to community groups.⁹ According to societal security, a traditional state-centered and sectoral-specific security approach greatly narrow the vision of how to deal with modern hybrid threats.¹⁰ Accordingly, societal security encourages development of an inclusive and holistic approach, including cooperation and coordination between military and civilian societies and between private and public sectors. After transferring a significant part of the infrastructure and social services from the state to the private sector during the socio-economic transformation of the 1990s, as a result of these privatization and administrative reforms, especially in the private sector, involvement of various groups in the state security processes became important.

Societal security is based on the principle that a threat to society should be met with a security policy implemented through active involvement and participation. As the range of asymmetric threats has increased, caused by conventional and unconventional actors, or by natural phenomena, states must develop a whole-of-society approach to contain them. Traditional security and defense agencies as well as a wide range of public institutions and groups should be actively involved in meeting the threat.¹¹ In this case, the state's role is of a strong and flexible coordinator. It manages and strengthens traditional institutions, mobilizes resources,

builds infrastructure, and creates narratives and strategies. It is no longer the only security actor, especially in the process of containment of hybrid threats, where commitments or responsibilities are also distributed to different groups of society.¹²

According to societal security, it is important to consider the concept of sustainable development when developing and planning security policies. In addition, to contain threats or crises, the process of increasing preparedness and enhancing resilience must be included. Areas that were not previously unequivocally linked to security now must be included in the security policy area. In particular, construction, trade, transport, healthcare, housing, supplies, and telecommunications should be considered.¹³

Societal security focuses on increasing the importance of public institutions in the development and implementation of security policies but does not diminish the role of traditional state institutions responsible for security, including defense forces, to be the main provider of security in the country. However, the concept emphasizes their inadequacy in the process of deterring modern threats if they act without the assistance of other societal actors.¹⁴ Therefore, according to societal security, involvement of civil and public institutions by the state in security processes, especially at the municipal level, increases defense capabilities and supports traditional security agencies.

This begs the question: what is the difference between societal security and other approaches to security management in which the role and importance of society was/is more or less taken into account, particularly during or after the Cold War? Parallels are often drawn between internal dimensions of security, but the concept of societal security is broader than internal or civil security, as the scale of the threat to society may now transcend state borders. Consequently, societal security is not limited to internal and civil threats, but also includes international/external threats in its national security policy and in some cases, in relation to them.

There is also a big difference vis-à-vis human security, which takes the object of threats down to the individual level. According to human security, the victim is an individual or a group of individuals, while in the case of societal security, the target is society as a whole functioning organism, more than a group of individuals. Consequently, societal security, in addition to protecting the safety of citizens, focuses on those community groups, values, infrastructure, and institutions that are vital to the functioning of the country.

⁷ Rhinard, M. (2021). Societal Security in Theory and Practice. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 22-43). New York: Routledge. p. 37

⁸ Rhinard, M. (2021). Societal Security in Theory and Practice. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 22-43). New York: Routledge. p. 28

⁹ Aaltola, M., & Juntunen, T. (2018). Nordic Model Meets Resilience - Finnish Strategy for Societal Security. In M. Aaltola, B. Kuznetsov, A. Sprud, & E. Vizgunova, *Societal Security in the Baltic Sea Region* (pp. 26-43). Riga: Latvian Institute of International Affairs. p. 35

¹⁰ Rhinard, M. (2007). Societal Security: An Emerging Role for the European Union. In A. Missiroli, *Building Societal Security in Europe: the EU's role in Managing Emergencies* (pp. 8-22). Brussels: European Policy Center. p. 13

¹¹ Larsson, S. (2021). Swedish Total Defence and the Emergence of Societal Security. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 45-68). New York: Routledge. p. 45

¹² Wigell, M. (2019). *Democratic Deterrence: How to Dissuade Hybrid Interference*. Helsinki: The Finnish Institute of International Affairs. pp. 9-10

¹³ Larsson, S. (2021). Swedish Total Defence and the Emergence of Societal Security. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 45-68). New York: Routledge. p. 48

¹⁴ Valtonen, V., & Branders, M. (2021). Tracing the Finnish Comprehensive Security Model. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 91-109). New York, Routledge. p. 93

If state security is a top-down process and human security is a bottom-up process, societal security is based on the idea of circulation.¹⁵ It combines a traditional, top-down process in which the state is responsible for managing security and a bottom-up process in which, due to the high degree of resilience, society demonstrates the ability to keep functioning in times of crisis.¹⁶ Here, societal security maintains a balance between those two approaches.

1.1 RELEVANCE AND IMPORTANCE

As a result of globalization and rapid information-technological development, the classic international state-centered international security regime is eroding, blurring the line between the country's internal and external actors, as well as the state of war and peace. Security has gone beyond traditional state control particularly in information, cyber, energy, climate, and economic-related threats, increasing the vulnerability of small and open societies.¹⁷ Even threats traditionally associated with national security and requiring a military response increasingly need civilian involvement and support. At the same time, challenges considered part of civilian responsibilities have acquired a dimension of international threats, making the security environment even more complex.¹⁸ Today, the target of the attack is not only state territory, sovereignty, and/or infrastructure. In many cases, the adversary, especially as a hybrid threat, focuses on public institution destruction, breakdown of values, formation of attitudes, and manipulation of minorities and vulnerable groups.

In this situation, traditional military methods of defense are often powerless to contain such threats without great civilian support. States find it increasingly difficult to deal with modern threats in an old-fashioned way - alone and without active participation of a wide range of societies in the struggle - especially in conditions where massive deregulation and privatization have reduced the state's monopoly on critical infrastructure.¹⁹

However, this should not be understood as societal security rejecting traditional, conventional threats and diminishing

the importance of military force or the state's central role in national security. On the contrary, societal security should be not an alternative to military defense, but its complementary component as one pillar of national security and an effective tool for deterring modern threats.²⁰ In today's environment, when geopolitics has "returned" to international security policy, the wave of militarism is intensifying, and traditional threats are still relevant. However, the start of a new wave of conventional threats did not occur through reduction of non-military threats; on the contrary, the synthesis of conventional and hybrid threats makes the modern security environment even more complex and pushes states to develop new approaches.

In such conditions, societal security has several advantages, which increase its value in a modern, complex security environment. First, societal security is an inclusive approach and focuses on broad public involvement in security processes. It is based on the whole-of-society model in security policy, where each group of society, based on its ability, knowledge, and experience, participates in security processes and takes responsibility for the continuous performance of assigned functions even in crisis situations.²¹ This allows the state to increase involvement of community groups that have the competence and desire to do so, while on the other hand, protecting vulnerable groups from external influences through welfare and reintegration programs. In both cases, the inclusive model chosen by the state consolidates society and increases its defense capacity.

Another positive aspect of societal security is that the concept is characterized by a high degree of decentralization in planning and implementing security policy, allowing it to bypass protracted decision-making processes and bureaucratic vertical hierarchy in times of crisis. In other words, it is based on a horizontal model of action which, instead of traditional command and control, emphasizes increasing rights and responsibilities at the local level and strengthens the coordination system.²² The goal of this approach is to make decisions as close to the threat's epicenter as possible, so time is not wasted on bureaucratic processes and remote action.²³ However, an effective system of training and coordination at the local level must be put in place so that during decentralization, crisis response does not turn into chaos.

Naturally, decentralization of security processes requires a flexible system of coordination and readiness to respond appropriately at the local level in terms of human and mate-

¹⁵ Syk, K., & Rådestad, C. (2018). Swedish Societal Security - The Battle of the Narrative. In M. Aaltola, B. Kuznetsov, A. Sprud, & E. Vizgunova, *Societal Security in the Baltic Sea Region* (pp. 83-100). Riga: Latvian Institute of International Affairs. p. 90

¹⁶ Aaltola, M., & Juntunen, T. (2018). Nordic Model Meets Resilience - Finnish Strategy for Societal Security. In M. Aaltola, B. Kuznetsov, A. Sprud, & E. Vizgunova, *Societal Security in the Baltic Sea Region* (pp. 26-43). Riga: Latvian Institute of International Affairs. p. 27

¹⁷ Banke, C. F., & Hjortshøj, A. M. (2018). Denmark: Societal Security in a Time of Upheaval. In M. Aaltola, B. Kuznetsov, A. Sprud, & E. Vizgunova, *Societal Security in the Baltic Sea Region* (pp. 13-26). Riga: Latvian Institute of International Affairs. p. 15

¹⁸ Burgess, J. P., & Mouhle, N. (2007). *Societal Security: Definitions and Scope for the Norwegian Setting*. Oslo: International Peace Research Institute

¹⁹ Morsut, C. (2018). Societal Security and Safety in Norway: The Duality of Samfunnssikkerhet. In M. Aaltola, B. Kuznetsov, A. Sprud, & E. Vizgunova, *Societal Security in the Baltic Sea Region* (pp. 60-83). Riga: Latvian Institute of International Affairs. p. 61

²⁰ Larsson, S., & Rhinard, M. (2021). Introduction: Comparing and Conceptualising Nordic Societal Security. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 3-22). New York: Routledge. p. 6

²¹ Wigell, M. (2019). *Democratic Deterrence: How to Dissuade Hybrid Interference*. Helsinki: The Finnish Institute of International Affairs. p. 10

²² Valtonen, V., & Branders, M. (2021). Tracing the Finnish Comprehensive Security Model. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 91-109). New York, Routledge. p. 101

²³ Burgess, J. P., & Mouhle, N. (2007). *Societal Security: Definitions and Scope for the Norwegian Setting*. Oslo: International Peace Research Institute

rial resources. Therefore, in addition to introducing a flexible coordination system, the state's role is to ensure state and local level public institutions have early warning systems, technical equipment, infrastructure, and training to deal with threats locally during the initial stage of a crisis before the central government mobilizes.²⁴ Proper crisis management in the early stages provides more opportunities to avoid the threat but requires more coordination with local authorities, business circles, and community groups, all of which requires training, reform, and infrastructure development programs.²⁵

This approach requires additional resources to build the system initially, but in the long run, societal security allows for resource optimization. By shifting responsibilities to public and civil institutions and delegating functions as a result of decentralization, the central security apparatus can free up resources from secondary tasks and channel them to areas in which it has a monopoly.

Given the growing complexity of modern threats and the need for increasing resources to contain them, the concept of societal security is gaining interest and support from security researchers and decision-makers.²⁶ In recent decades, in countries where privatization and outsourcing have transferred some state-owned infrastructure and services to the private sector (water, health, transport, internet, energy), civil participation in security policies has increased, as they are now on the front lines of modern threats.²⁷ Consequently, they participate in security processes with their own human and material resources. This allows the state to redistribute and save critical resources. In addition to business circles, state resources are optimized by involving the media, civil society, and other groups in security processes. This is particularly important for poor states that, due to limited resources, are unable to fully take appropriate measures to contain the wide range of increased threats.

Societal security is also distinguished by a high degree of democracy. This is especially important given the current trends to pay special attention to protection of civil liberties, human rights, and the principles of democracy while developing and implementing security policy. The "democracy versus security" dilemma, which is one key issue in security discourse, reduces critical attitudes towards societal security, as broader public involvement makes security policy planning and implementation more democratic. Conse-

quently, societal security can even be considered a means of democratizing security policy. However, associated risk increases. When many groups in society are involved in security processes, the focus shifts from the normal agenda to safety, increasing the likelihood of over-securitization of society. In this regard, it is important to maintain the right balance so that security democratization does not escalate into over-securitization.²⁸

The societal security approach is also effective in terms of strategic communication inside and outside the country. First of all, focusing on more visible and relevant modern threats in addition to conventional threats creates a sense of security in society. From the traditional security point of view, it does not leave room for criticism about excessive militarization since security has a strong civilian nature. This critical tendency is typical for Western countries that are not in danger of direct military aggression and whose population has a negative attitude towards increased military spending.

Based on the above characteristics, societal security can be considered a concept of the future, especially due to its holistic and universal nature. First, the continuity of the theoretical development process provides a strong intellectual base and support in the practical application of the concept of societal security. In addition, it integrates the human, societal, state, social, technological, political, economic, organizational, and international aspects of security, trying to cover all the major spheres. Societal security contributes not only to development of defense capabilities, but also to accumulation of knowledge around security and to raising public awareness, thereby empowering society and increasing its role in defending critical functions, values, social institutions, civil society, and democracy.²⁹

1.2 CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The roots of societal security emerged within the Copenhagen School of International Relations during the last decade of the Cold War. In his 1983 book, *People, States and Fear*, Barry Buzan, a prominent British scholar at the school, challenged dominant, traditional, and state-centric approaches to security. However, the new types of threats and complex security environments created by the geopolitical changes and socio-economic transformations of the 1980s and 1990s accelerated the process of creating a new concept and contributed to the emergence of societal security.

In particular, the large-scale changes brought about by the Soviet Union's collapse, the end of the Cold War, globalization, and rapid information-technological development not

24 Morsut, C. (2021). The Emergence and Development of Samfunnsikkerhet in Norway. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 68-91). New York: Routledge. p. 80

25 Christensen, M. F. (2018, July 23). „Welcome back to the Cold War.“ Retrieved from Berlingske: <https://www.berlingske.dk/samfund/velkommen-tilbage-til-den-kolde-krig>

26 Rhinard (a), M. (2007). Societal Security: An Emerging Role for the European Union. In A. Missiroli, *Building Societal Security in Europe: The EU's Role in Managing Emergencies* (pp. 8-22). Brussels: European Policy Center. p. 9

27 Rhinard (a), M. (2007). Societal Security: An Emerging Role for the European Union. In A. Missiroli, *Building Societal Security in Europe: The EU's Role in Managing Emergencies* (pp. 8-22). Brussels: European Policy Center. p. 19

28 Rhinard, M. (2021). Societal Security in Theory and Practice. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 22-43). New York: Routledge. p. 35

29 Valtonen, V., & Branders, M. (2021). Tracing the Finnish Comprehensive Security Model. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 91-109). New York, Routledge. p. 92

only changed the nature of the threats but also the perception of security. This was followed by strengthening the paradigm of social constructivism in the academic space, not only deepening international security research but expanding it to cover new sectors. This created the opportunity to disrupt the narrow focus of security research within a military framework, filling the space between state security and individual security with a focus on public safety.

The creation of the societal security concept by Copenhagen School representatives was not only a serious attempt to critically rethink the prevailing model of security, but also to contribute to the sectoral expansion of security. Buzan proposed a new approach of focusing on military, political, economic, and environmental security by adding societal security as well. Ole Wæver, a Danish researcher at the Copenhagen School, attached particular importance to post-Cold War security environments in which societies could maintain identity and basic characteristics in ever-changing conditions in the face of possible or actual threats.³⁰ This reasoning became a cornerstone of societal security.

As a result of the active work by the Copenhagen School, not only a new concept of societal security emerged, but also wide-ranging theoretical discussions have increased interest outside academia, especially among security practitioners. It is noteworthy that despite harsh criticism, societal security was considered by many opponents to be a major alternative to the previously dominant state-centered approach to security education and discourse.³¹

The new concept changed the focus of threat perception. Threats during the Cold War were mainly related to military actions that threatened territorial integrity and state sovereignty. In other words, military power mainly from other states was considered the main threat.³² Since military threats could only be contained by the state, existing national security paradigms recognized the state's monopoly on security processes. However, a reduction in the likelihood of conventional wars and the emergence of new threat types in national security visions have raised the issue of public vulnerability, which had previously not been given due importance. As a result, security remained within the state framework, but the focus shifted to society as a key vulnerable component of the state, and attacking society was perceived as a threat to destabilize the state.

During the initial stage of developing the concept of societal security and despite the advancement of the public component, the focus was still mainly on military threats. Buzan made no secret of the fact that military force was still

the most expensive, politically powerful, and visible component of state security (Buzan, 1991, p. 35). In addition, Buzan viewed society as closely linked to the state and, consequently, saw societal security as an extension of state security, hindering the independent development of a concept and its theoretical or methodological evolution.³³

Other Copenhagen School members began to break with this vision in the early 1990s. In particular, in his 1993 book *Identity, Migration, and the New Security Agenda in Europe*, Ole Wæver sought to disconnect the concept of societal security from state security by identifying society as a separate security object and portraying social groups as separate players in security processes. However, when identifying societal groups, Wæver focused on their identities, which led to the issue of identity in societal security research. Wæver later portrayed societal security as protecting public identities from threats. This greatly narrowed the concept of societal security and reduced it to the concept of protecting one's own identity by societal groups. Consequently, in security studies, societal security was also considered to some extent as identity security.

Related to public identity security issues, the concept of societal security has been linked to the theory of securitization. Consequently, in the context of societal security, securitization identified all threats and paid special attention to those that posed a challenge to the social and cultural survival of the societal group.³⁴

By putting societal security into the identity framework, it was cut off from other important issues necessary for the proper functioning of society, such as social environment and economic conditions. This, in turn, gave rise to the need for further concept development and contributed to a new direction.³⁵ This new direction stressed the need to fully protect not only the identity of society but also the complex mechanism of society. It focused on maintaining society's vital functions and put forward the protection of identity by societal willingness to maintain the ability to function properly in a crisis situation.³⁶ For example, according to Swedish researcher Bengt Sundelius, the ability of government and civil society to continue to function, maintain critical infrastructure, and uphold the values and principles of democratic governance are no less important than the protection of state territory.³⁷

30 Wæver, O. (1993). *Societal Security: The Concept*. In B. B. Ole Wæver, *Identity, Migration, and the New Security Order in Europe* (pp. 17-40). London: Pinter. p. 23

31 Theiler, T. (2009). *Societal Security*. In M. D. Cavelty, V. Mauer, & T. Balzacq, *The Routledge Handbook of Security Studies* (pp. 105-114). London: Routledge. p. 105

32 Rhinard, M. (2021). *Security in Theory and Practice*. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 22-43). New York: Routledge. p. 23

33 Rhinard, M. (2021). *Security in Theory and Practice*. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 22-43). New York: Routledge. p. 24

34 Theiler, T. (2009). *Societal Security*. In M. D. Cavelty, V. Mauer, & T. Balzacq, *The Routledge Handbook of Security Studies* (pp. 105-114). London: Routledge. p. 106

35 Rhinard, M. (2021). *Security in Theory and Practice*. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 22-43). New York: Routledge. p. 26

36 Larsson, S., & Rhinard, M. (2021). *Introduction: Comparing and Conceptualising Nordic Societal Security*. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 3-22). New York: Routledge. p. 9

37 Sundelius, B. (2006). *A Brief on Embedded Societal Security*. *Information and Security*, 23–37. p. 26

Consequently, at the turn of the millennium some societal security researchers, including Bengt Sundelius (Sweden), Jan Hovden (Norway), Alyson Bailes (UK), Dan Hamilton (USA), and Peter Burgess (France), have written about the need to preserve the vital functions and values of society before the protection of identity. As a result, a new approach to societal security was freed from the framework of identity and acquired a functional vision of security. The popularity of this new approach to societal security was facilitated by Scandinavian researchers and analysts paying special attention to it in policy papers and recommendations proposed to the state. In addition to theoretical strengths, functional security has great potential for practical application in current security processes. As a result, it has become more acceptable and interesting to security makers and 'para-academic circles' in the field of security.³⁸

Despite the expectation that the two approaches to societal security would merge, and despite numerous intersections, they continue to develop in parallel. The inclusion of the concept in a unified theoretical framework is mainly hindered by its two theoretical and somewhat contradictory directions - development through post-structuralism and through social constructivism.³⁹ In addition, the functionalist approach shifted from theoretical development to practical application, facilitated by a fundamental overhaul of security policy after the 9/11 attacks. As a result, the concept of "homeland security" was developed in the United States, which adapted to American reality and strategic culture. In Europe, the realization that a necessary revision of the existing security model was needed coincided with the academic popularity of societal security.⁴⁰ Consequently, interest in societal security increased in Europe.

This was especially observed in northern Europe due to several factors. First, theoretical development of societal security took place mainly in Nordic academic institutions and think tanks. Consequently, the mobility of researchers and analysts in public services contributed to an increase in knowledge and interest in societal security in security agencies. In addition, the conceptual framework on which societal security was based was well in line with social norms and traditions of social inclusion established in Nordic countries, where the state and society shared responsibilities for challenges and threats facing the country. This was also facilitated by the decentralized model of security in Nordic strategic culture. At the same time, while rethinking security policy in Europe, it has become clear that deterring modern threats is increasingly difficult without prevention and preparedness. As a result, security policy in northern Europe has become essentially crisis management, leading to increased interest

in a functionalist approach to societal security which is doctrinally based on knowledge and practical experience in crisis management.⁴¹

As we can see, the creation of societal security coincides with the end of the Cold War and has a complex history of development over the last thirty years, during which theoretical transformation of the concept and practical application were accompanied by complex and contradictory processes. Although there were differences and, in some cases, incompatibilities between the two currents of the concept, as well as theoretical and doctrinal development, it is a misconception that the first current of societal security was academic and later put into practical application. Based on the discourse supported by scientific theories, both contributed to strengthening directions of further teaching and academic research, as well as inclusion of the societal security concept in the model of security governance.⁴²

1.3 INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE: NORDIC DIMENSION OF SOCIETAL SECURITY

Societal security is closely linked to the Nordic region. In addition to its theoretical origins and development being linked to regional academic and research centers, the main concept principles are considered in security management models and put into practical application in Nordic countries. Interest in modern security policies is not new to other countries, but the model of state organization, socio-economic system, and political culture in the Nordic region have created a particularly favorable environment for the establishment of societal security. Even before the advent of societal security itself, the basic principles used by Nordic countries in planning and implementing security policies were well in line with the later developed concept. In particular, the emphasis on the protection of civil liberties, human rights, and the principles of democracy and social justice in the development of security policies made it easier to introduce societal security principles in Nordic countries.

It is also noteworthy that in addition to good preconditions and a favorable environment, high-ranking Nordic security officials were aware of the need for transformation and were receptive to new views. This led to the establishment of societal security principles in the Nordic region and not in many other European countries where similar preconditions existed, but security decision-makers were skeptical of societal security innovations and preferred adherence to traditional approaches.

It should also be noted that the theoretical development of societal security coincided with the process of rethinking de-

³⁸ Researchers who alternated between working in the field of analysis and in the public service (practitioner).

³⁹ Theiler, T. (2009). Societal Security. In M. D. Cavelty, V. Mauer, & T. Balzacq, *The Routledge Handbook of Security Studies* (pp. 105-114). London: Routledge. p. 105

⁴⁰ Rhinard, M. (2021). Security in Theory and Practice. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 22-43). New York: Routledge. p. 31

⁴¹ Rhinard, M. (2021). Security in Theory and Practice. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 22-43). New York: Routledge. p. 27

⁴² Rhinard, M. (2021). Security in Theory and Practice. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 22-43). New York: Routledge. p. 37

fense and security policy in Nordic countries after the end of the Cold War and facilitated its practical application. The reduction in the likelihood of a direct military strike shifted the focus from a civil defense component to security policy, coinciding with a trend toward new unconventional threats. Both factors contributed to the growing interest in societal security. Consequently, new strategic documents and government reports created by Nordic countries as part of security sector reform have increasingly included civil protection components focusing on societal security.⁴³ However, it is important to emphasize that intellectual discussions on societal security preceded the demilitarization process that began in the region.⁴⁴

In Nordic countries, there is no common, identical vision of societal security, which allows for different interpretations for each state. Despite the similarity of the conceptual framework, there are structural, discursive, and terminological differences. Consequently, there is an exaggerated view of a homogeneous Nordic model of societal security equally shared by the countries of the region.⁴⁵ The existing differences are due to the historical experience of each country, strategic culture, geographical location, and alliance policies. However, despite the differences, there are common features. In particular, these include a broader understanding of security, advancement of the role of society, the experience of total defense, and strengthening the social welfare component in security. The above characteristics are the foundation of the approach on which each country's societal security model was built.⁴⁶

Despite the different Nordic security models, societal security allows them to converge visions and deepen regional cooperation in areas of defense, security, and crisis management. Accordingly, individual states and regional organizations focus on promoting societal security. For example, in April 2009, the ministers responsible for civil security in Nordic countries signed 'The Haga Declaration' to enhance cooperation on societal security issues.⁴⁷ In the same year, three of the thirteen proposals in the Stoltenberg Report were related to societal security.⁴⁸

Collaboration is enhanced not only at the political level, but also at the academic and analytical level, and promoted by regional organizations through research programs and conferences. For example, the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers are actively involved in strengthening the regional cooperation format in terms of societal security. The Nordic Council of Ministers funded the Nordic Research Program for Societal Security,⁴⁹ through which significant research work was conducted to identify similarities and differences in the region in terms of societal security.

It is important to give a brief overview of each model to understand that, despite different security policies, all Nordic countries share the basic principles of societal security.

Sweden

Extensive public involvement in security processes is part of Swedish strategic culture. The link between external and internal threats, as well as the need for close coordination of military and civil defense, was defined in Swedish civil defense law as early as the 1940s. The concept of total defense, which emphasized the importance of public participation in territorial defense and support for military units, also became popular in Sweden during World War II and was a dominant vision in the country's security policy during the Cold War. The Total Defense Research Institute was established in 1952 to promote qualified and thoughtful public involvement in security processes, providing important knowledge about total defense to civil servants and the military and civil society, business, and other communities, which helped with raising awareness, socialization, and creation of networks.⁵⁰

In the aftermath of the Cold War, while transforming defense and security policy, societal security became acceptable to many Swedish military officials because it did not deviate from the core principles of total defense, provided a good opportunity for linguistic or conceptual extension,⁵¹ and, at the same time, offered a broader and more relevant security perspective than territorial defense. Consequently, the process of transforming the defense and security sector in Sweden was largely painless and the adoption of the concept of societal security was relatively easy. The Swedish Total Defense Doctrine was no less focused on public protection than on territorial defense as it focused on a policy of containment.⁵² The practical application of societal security in Sweden has led to structural changes and creation of new research pro-

⁴³ Larsson, S., & Rhinard, M. (2021). Introduction: Comparing and Conceptualising Nordic Societal Security. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 3-22). New York: Routledge. p. 10

⁴⁴ Larsson, S. (2021). Swedish Total Defence and the Emergence of Societal Security. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 45-68). New York: Routledge. p. 46

⁴⁵ Larsson, S., & Rhinard, M. (2021). Conclusion: Convergence and Divergence in Nordic Societal Security. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 225-235). New York: Routledge. p. 228

⁴⁶ Larsson, S., & Rhinard, M. (2021). Conclusion: Convergence and Divergence in Nordic Societal Security. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 225-235). New York: Routledge. pp. 225-26

⁴⁷ Rhinard, M. (2021). Security in Theory and Practice. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 22-43). New York: Routledge. p. 28

⁴⁸ Larsson, S., & Rhinard, M. (2021). Introduction: Comparing and Conceptualising Nordic Societal Security. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 3-22). New York: Routledge. pp. 11-12

⁴⁹ Rhinard, M. (2021). Security in Theory and Practice. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 22-43). New York: Routledge. p. 29

⁵⁰ Larsson, S. (2021). Swedish Total Defence and the Emergence of Societal Security. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 45-68). New York: Routledge. p. 48

⁵¹ Bailes, A. (2014). Societal Security and Small States. In C. Archer, A. J. Bailes, & A. Wivel, *Small States and International Security: Europe and Beyond* (pp. 66-79). London: Routledge

⁵² Larsson, S. (2021). Swedish Total Defence and the Emergence of Societal Security. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 45-68). New York: Routledge. p. 61

grams. Since the Swedish Crisis Management Agency started using societal security as an operational concept in 2006, numerous grants have been allocated for societal security research and theoretical development.⁵³

Societal security in Sweden is based on the interaction of two co-existing, parallel, and closely related strategic visions of security - total defense and emergency preparedness.⁵⁴ Both require broad public involvement and close coordination between state and civic institutions to maintain public functions and critical infrastructure in case of a threat.

In Sweden, as in other Nordic countries, special attention is paid to the socio-economic dimension in security policy. In the 1960s, within the framework of the doctrine of total defense, all the spheres related to the public organism and its social welfare were securitized. Despite some modifications, this approach has been maintained in Sweden, and the welfare state system is still one of the security tools to protect vulnerable groups and maintain public stability.

Denmark

The rise of hybrid threats⁵⁵ in the unpredictable security environment created after the end of the Cold War strengthened the perception in Denmark that the past model of security no longer corresponded to reality. This created a space for a complete overhaul of the concept and the emergence of new ideas. The transformation process proved to be beneficial for societal security, as the emphasis was on decentralizing security decision-making and increasing individual responsibility.⁵⁶

While 'societal security' is not officially mentioned in Danish strategic documents, national security policy coordination and cooperation are based on those core principles.⁵⁷ Defense and foreign policy strategies pay more and more attention to public involvement and the establishment of a whole-of-society approach in the security policy process.

Denmark's security policy is based on the basic premise that it is a small open society in which the state system of democratic welfare is the main instrument of defense and at the same time is an object of protection.⁵⁸ A key concept in the Danish societal security model is *Tryghed*, which does not have a direct translation but is a synthesis of physical security, well-being, and social inclusion. In the process of increasing public resilience, ensuring *Tryghed* is the main security goal of the welfare state.⁵⁹

Finland

In Finland, societal security is known as the Comprehensive Security Model (CSM), which is achieved through cooperation between state and public actors in security policy and is characterized by a strong, preventive nature.⁶⁰ It is based on a flexible system of information sharing, coordination, and rapid response between the many security process actors. Although CSM is part of widespread societal security in the Nordic region, its specificity and uniqueness are due to the historical, geographical, and strategic context of Finland.

It is clear from the title that the Finnish model is based on a whole-of-society approach. Helsinki is well aware that in a volatile security environment, a small country needs to fully mobilize public resources and cultural capital to ensure its own security. Therefore, the strategy is built on the principle that in the event of any threat or crisis, the government, civil society, and private sector should continue to cooperate and perform functions and duties properly. In this sense, the system is sustainable. Cooperation is based on the principle of understanding one's responsibility,⁶¹ which is due to the long tradition of cooperation between the public, private, and civil sectors in Finland.⁶²

According to the Finnish model, the process of planning and implementing security policy focuses not only on the involvement of all groups in society but also on the source of threats they face.⁶³ In order to study public opinion and attitudes towards threats and involve the population in securi-

53 Rhinard, M. (2021). Security in Theory and Practice. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 22-43). New York: Routledge. p. 28

54 Syk, K., & Rådestad, C. (2018). Swedish Societal Security - The Battle of the Narrative. In M. Aaltola, B. Kuznetsov, A. Sprud, & E. Vizgunova, *Societal Security in the Baltic Sea Region* (pp. 83-100). Riga: Latvian Institute of International Affairs. p. 83

55 According to NATO hybrid threats combine military and non-military as well as covert and overt means, including disinformation, cyber-attacks, economic pressure, deployment of irregular armed groups and use of regular forces. Hybrid methods are used to blur the lines between war and peace and attempt to sow doubt in the minds of target populations. They aim to destabilize and undermine societies. For more see: shorturl.at/jpvz6

56 Liebetrau, T. (2021). Conceptual and Practical Changes to Security in Denmark: Expect the Unexpected, Decide the Undecidable. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 109-129). New York: Routledge. pp. 109-110

57 Banke, C. F., & Hjortshøj, A. M. (2018). Denmark: Societal Security in a Time of Upheaval. In M. Aaltola, B. Kuznetsov, A. Sprud, & E. Vizgunova, *Societal Security in the Baltic Sea Region* (pp. 13-26). Riga: Latvian Institute of International Affairs. p. 17

58 Banke, C. F., & Hjortshøj, A. M. (2018). Denmark: Societal Security in a Time of Upheaval. In M. Aaltola, B. Kuznetsov, A. Sprud, & E. Vizgunova, *Societal Security in the Baltic Sea Region* (pp. 13-26). Riga: Latvian Institute of International Affairs. p. 15

59 Banke, C. F., & Hjortshøj, A. M. (2018). Denmark: Societal Security in a Time of Upheaval. In M. Aaltola, B. Kuznetsov, A. Sprud, & E. Vizgunova, *Societal Security in the Baltic Sea Region* (pp. 13-26). Riga: Latvian Institute of International Affairs. p. 18

60 Valtonen, V., & Branders, M. (2021). Tracing the Finnish Comprehensive Security Model. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 91-109). New York, Routledge. p. 91

61 Saloniun-Pasternak, C. (2017). An Effective Antidote: The Four Components that Make Finland More Resilient to Hybrid Campaigns. Helsinki: The Finnish Institute of International Affairs. p. 1

62 Rhinard (a), M. (2007). Societal Security: An Emerging Role for the European Union. In A. Missiroli, *Building societal security in Europe: the EU's role in managing emergencies* (pp. 8-22). Brussels: European Policy Center. p. 19

63 Aaltola, M., & Juntunen, T. (2018). Nordic Model Meets Resilience - Finnish Strategy for Societal Security. In M. Aaltola, B. Kuznetsov, A. Sprud, & E. Vizgunova, *Societal Security in the Baltic Sea Region* (pp. 26-43). Riga: Latvian Institute of International Affairs. p. 63

ty policy planning at the local level, the system of “Security Cafés” was created. As a result of broad public involvement in security policy and decentralization at the local level, the “72-hour concept” is in place, which means that if a crisis occurs, every citizen should be able to survive for seventy-two hours without government assistance.⁶⁴

Like Sweden and Denmark, the socio-economic dimension plays a large role in Finnish security policy. A clear example of this is that three of seven identified areas of national and public security in Finnish strategic documents address socio-economic issues, including the security of economic infrastructure and supplies, maintaining the well-being and services of the population, and ensuring psychological resilience.⁶⁵

Norway

In Norway, societal security is known as *Samfunnssikkerhet*, which developed independently of the Copenhagen School and was created as a result of the adaptation of the national security policy to the new geopolitical or social reality. In Norway, the conceptual precursor to societal security was total defense. In the dominant doctrine created after the Second World War, a large part was occupied by the component of civil preparedness with a goal to mobilize the whole society in case of crisis.⁶⁶ Like other Nordic countries, Norway's security policy is characterized by a strong trend of decentralization, based on the tradition of mobilizing society and resources at the municipal level.

Unlike Sweden, the Norwegian societal security model is characterized by a broader civic dimension. This is due to the transformation of the Total Defense Doctrine which came under the Ministry of Justice in Norway, while in Sweden it remained under the Ministry of Defense.⁶⁷ In 1999, the Vulnerability Commission was established by the Ministry of Justice and in addition to the armed forces, civil defense representatives, industry, and academia were widely represented. This allowed the commission to see threats from different angles, and each member of the commission, within his or her field, contributed to the development of a complex approach.⁶⁸

The work process of the Commission and its report played

a major role in establishing principles of societal security in Norway. The final report of the Commission focused on security policy, not only on territorial integrity and sovereignty, but also on the health care system, social welfare, democratic values, the smooth functioning of institutions, and the protection of the environment.⁶⁹

The welfare state is a powerful tool for ensuring societal security and deterring hybrid threats in Norway as well. Welfare-state related measures, including access to free education, employment and poverty reduction programs, equal opportunities, and integration are seen as a way to prevent radicalization of vulnerable groups and have strong support from state institutions and the general public.⁷⁰

Another feature that characterizes the Norwegian model of societal security is its strong academic character. In parallel with widespread use in national security policy, the concept of societal security continues to develop theoretically in academia. As early as the 1990s, a master's program in societal security (*Samfunnssikkerhet*)⁷¹ was set up at the University of Stavanger (then University College) aimed at preparing human resources including youth, in public resilience, crisis management, threat prevention, and emergency preparedness.

Despite the different political, historical, geographical, and strategic contexts, as well as unique traditions of cooperation between the public, private, and civil sectors in each Nordic country, one of the strongest common features in their societal security models, is a strong socio-economic element. This is why assessing the strategic culture of Nordic countries is unthinkable without a close link between the welfare-state model and security approaches. The regional tradition of strong social welfare has historically created a good precondition and has had a major impact on the establishment of existing security discourse and practice.⁷² Therefore, in the process of sharing knowledge and experience of Nordic countries, it is necessary to focus not only on the value of societal security but also on socio-economic aspects as well.

64 Aaltola, M., & Juntunen, T. (2018). Nordic Model Meets Resilience - Finnish Strategy for Societal Security. In M. Aaltola, B. Kuznetsov, A. Sprud, & E. Vizgunova, *Societal Security in the Baltic Sea Region* (pp. 26-43). Riga: Latvian Institute of International Affairs. p. 63

65 Valtonen, V., & Branders, M. (2021). Tracing the Finnish Comprehensive Security Model. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 91-109). New York, Routledge. p. 95

66 Morsut, C. (2021). The Emergence and Development of *Samfunnssikkerhet* in Norway. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 68-91). New York: Routledge. p. 69

67 Larsson, S. (2021). Swedish Total Defence and the Emergence of Societal Security. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 45-68). New York: Routledge. p. 59

68 Morsut, C. (2021). The Emergence and Development of *Samfunnssikkerhet* in Norway. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 68-91). New York: Routledge. p. 72

69 Morsut, C. (2021). The Emergence and Development of *Samfunnssikkerhet* in Norway. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 68-91). New York: Routledge. p. 73

70 Jore, S. H. (2021). Countering Radicalisation in Norwegian Terrorism Policy: A Welfare State Approach to Societal Security. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 179-199). New York: Routledge. p. 189

71 Morsut, C. (2021). The Emergence and Development of *Samfunnssikkerhet* in Norway. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 68-91). New York: Routledge. p. 82

72 Larsson, S., & Rhinard, M. (2021). Introduction: Comparing and Conceptualising Nordic Societal Security. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 3-22). New York: Routledge. pp. 6-7

1.4 SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF SOCIETAL SECURITY

Societal security continues to evolve over three decades of existence and undergoes constant conceptual or theoretical transformation in parallel with strategic use in different countries. Consequently, stagnation and detachment from the intellectual base have never occurred. It is the strong academic foundation and evolutionary model of development that determine the concept's sustainability. The innovative nature of societal security, which involves previously unknown or ignored approaches in security policy, allows the concept to adapt quickly to changing threat conditions in an unpredictable international security environment.

The strategic and conceptual development of the societal security management model envisages refinement of the legal framework, increases technological and human resources, accumulates intellectual knowledge, provides for information and strategic communication, strengthens public legitimacy, and deepens international cooperation. This requires constant systematic monitoring, research, and analysis of modern threats, and their causes and consequences, which ultimately leads to the development of an effective and flexible threat assessment system.

Although societal security is an effective tool for deterring modern threats, its introduction is fraught with difficulties. It requires high responsibility, readiness, and involvement from society. It is impossible for it to function fully without public consensus and solidarity. Frequent socio-economic challenges and fragmentation of societies in developing countries hinder the introduction of the societal security model, increase vulnerability, and pose a threat. In addition, societal security requires a high degree of public trust, which requires transparent, strong, and effective state and public institutions. In addition, there is a need for a sound management and coordination system which can be ensured through good governance.⁷³

As has been repeatedly mentioned, the starting point of societal security is a whole-of-society approach requiring participation in security processes by broad societal involvement. If certain groups are not able to participate in security processes, public unity is broken, and the security system is fragmented. Broad, voluntary, and qualified community involvement in the security process is implied. Consequently, the state should focus not only on ensuring involvement of civil actors in security policy but also on increasing their capabilities and qualifications for the involvement to be effective and beneficial. This is exactly one of the reasons why security policy was connected with socio-economic factors, since the willingness and competence among the social groups facing socio-economic hardships to contribute to security is low, while their vulnerability remains high.

Societal security theory focuses on identifying factors that increase societal vulnerability. In contrast to traditional security approaches, the focus of societal security has been on a wide range of socio-economic challenges that hinder the proper functioning of society and reduce resilience while deterring threats. Such socio-economic challenges can be poverty, unemployment, inequality, social marginalization, gender discrimination, and an aging population.⁷⁴ It is high public sensitivity to the above-mentioned factors that leads to a special emphasis on social and economic issues within societal security.

Modern states need to take the growing threats posed by poverty and inequality into account in the planning and implementation of security policies. Consequently, there is a need to find tools to contain them. In the process, societal security has grown from the fundamental demands of society and brought its two main priorities - security and prosperity - closer together. In this process, the Welfare State Model has become an instrument not only for the prevention and containment of socio-economic problems but also for security challenges arising from them, as it provides effective means for bridging public gaps and ensuring social stability.⁷⁵

Welfare programs are an effective tool of security policy to increase public resilience, deradicalization, and reduce vulnerability. However, in terms of political will or structural implementation, the state plays a key role in providing them. Despite the delegation of functions of security policy, the state's monopoly is maintained in ensuring socio-economic conditions such as the protection of social justice, distribution of welfare, and reduction of inequality.⁷⁶ Consequently, only the state has the means to make social welfare part of the security policy.

The state's ability to link social welfare and security is also in its direct interests, since addressing socio-economic challenges reduces public vulnerability, increases resilience, and allows the state to better mobilize society in the event of a crisis. At the same time, linking welfare programs and security policies increases public confidence in state institutions. This is why the Swedish state security vision, welfare, and warfare are inextricably linked.⁷⁷ The experience of successful implementation in the state security policy of societal security indicates that the concept works better in countries with a strong welfare state model.

⁷³ Rhinard, M. (2021). Societal Security in Theory and Practice. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 22-43). New York: Routledge. p. 37

⁷⁴ Bailes, A. (2008). What Role for the Private Sector in 'Societal Security'? Brussels: The European Policy Centre. p. 13

⁷⁵ Aaltola, M., & Juntunen, T. (2018). Nordic Model Meets Resilience - Finnish Strategy for Societal Security. In M. Aaltola, B. Kuznetsov, A. Sprud, & E. Vizgunova, *Societal Security in the Baltic Sea Region* (pp. 26-43). Riga: Latvian Institute of International Affairs. p. 31

⁷⁶ Hyvönen, A.-E., & Juntunen, T. (2021). From "Spiritual Defence" to Robust Resilience in the Finnish Comprehensive Security Model. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 154-179). New York: Routledge. p. 170

⁷⁷ Larsson, S., & Rhinard, M. (2021). Introduction: Comparing and Conceptualising Nordic Societal Security. In S. Larsson, & M. Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (pp. 3-22). New York: Routledge. p. 7-8

The close connection between welfare and security policies requires not only political will but also broad public support. Consequently, the model needs to have a top-down process where decision-makers understand socio-economic issues in security policy and a bottom-up process with strong motivation and support from society itself.⁷⁸ At best, the process has a two-way direction. In particular, there should be a willingness of decision-makers to widely represent social welfare programs in security policy and build broad public support.

In the process of linking security and social welfare, societal security places particular emphasis on securitization, as the security policy attaches special importance to outlining what factors pose a threat to society. Securitization identifies challenges that threaten the state and society. Securitization is also important for developing legitimate measures to mitigate threats. During securitization, the connection between the state and society increases as community groups share the state's vision of the reality of danger.

According to the concept of societal security, the state and society are closely related but are different actors, so there must be agreement and trust between them when formulating security policy. Consequently, steps taken by the state in securitization should not contradict the prevailing values and beliefs in society.⁷⁹ Therefore, when the public is actively engaged and involved in the development of security policy, the securitization process has a basis of universal consent and enjoys broad public support.

However, especially when securing socio-economic challenges, it is important not to declare a related part of society as a 'risk group.' For example, if poverty is identified as a security challenge, the poor population should not automatically be considered a 'risk group' because threat exposure of a particular community group may be accompanied by increased vulnerability, stigmatization/marginalization, and distrust between groups.⁸⁰ This is why societal security emphasizes positive, motivational securitization promoting public resilience and is different from negative securitization, which focuses on the factor of fear.

⁷⁸ Theiler, T. (2009). Societal Security. In M. D. Cavelty, V. Mauer, & T. Balzacq, *The Routledge Handbook of Security Studies* (pp. 105-114). London: Routledge. p. 107

⁷⁹ Theiler, T. (2009). Societal Security. In M. D. Cavelty, V. Mauer, & T. Balzacq, *The Routledge Handbook of Security Studies* (pp. 105-114). London: Routledge. p. 107

⁸⁰ Burgess, J. P., & Mouhle, N. (2007). *Societal Security: Definitions and Scope for the Norwegian Setting*. Oslo: International Peace Research Institute

2

SECURITY CHALLENGES FACING GEORGIA: COMPLEX THREATS FOR STATE AND SOCIETY

Since regaining independence, Georgia has faced domestic and foreign challenges that have plunged the country into crisis. According to many respondents surveyed in the current study, in a complex geopolitical environment, Georgia's development model does not provide a clear opportunity to successfully deal with threats facing the state and society. The crisis-driven transformation and state-building process have left a difficult legacy, with the state largely focused on repelling vital and immediate threats and failing to develop a long-term threat prevention strategy. The range of challenges facing the country and society is increasing, hindering the full implementation of basic state functions in the process of combating the challenges.

Societal security, which focuses on protecting society while improving state and human security levels, is a promising model for a country with a complex security environment. This complex security environment is caused by the variety of conventional and unconventional threats that the Georgian state and its citizens face. Complicating this is the fact that Georgia's restoration of independence and crisis-filled transition coincided with the emergence and intensification of new hybrid threats on the international stage, making an already fragile security system more vulnerable. Consequently, the recent 30-year history of independent Georgia has shown that the traditional model of security alone is insufficient to contain the wide range of threats facing the country. Georgia needs to revise its security vision while getting acquainted with the best international practices, and carefully studying the challenges and threats facing the country.

In this context, this chapter focuses on the analysis of threats that Georgia and its citizens are facing in order to highlight the need to adapt to the type of security model where the state and society can effectively repel existential threats together.

THE MAIN THREATS FACING THE STATE

Occupation and Threats from the Russian Federation

According to research respondents, the main existential threat to the statehood of Georgia is the Russian Federation. It

is not in Moscow's interests to have a successful, strong, democratic state in the form of Georgia, which may encourage other satellite countries. Georgia's occupied regions are the fruit of the Russian threat. The human losses suffered during the August 2008 war, Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia/Tskhinvali independence, the militarization of these regions, and the new wave of Internally Displaced Persons made the Georgian security environment even more vulnerable. Occupation with accompanying threats has become a source of constant and sudden destabilization for the Georgian state. Proximity to Russian troops near the country's main transport highway, the "Borderization,"⁸¹ and systematic abduction of Georgian citizens increase the sense of insecurity in society and puts the country in an alarm mode. In addition, diplomatic efforts and resources are spent on non-recognition policy and containment of possible annexation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia/Tskhinvali region by the Russian Federation.

Another manifestation of the Russian threat is the information war. The Georgian state and society deal with Russian disinformation, misinformation, and propaganda daily. Russian information operations against Georgia serve several purposes: to strengthen anti-Western sentiments; to sow hopelessness, insecurity, and dissatisfaction; to stir up nationalist-conservative ideas that will be directed against neighboring states; to establish the image of Russia as an Orthodox Christian or strong state, among other goals.⁸² Added to this is Russia's attempt to internationally portray Georgia as an underdeveloped, unpromising, and unsuccessful country, where the investment of political and financial resources would be futile.⁸³ At the same time, Moscow is using political, diplomatic, and information tools to make Georgia's occupied territories disappear from the international spotlight.

⁸¹ The process of putting up barbed wire and artificial barriers across the occupied territories of Georgia by the Russian Federation, which is usually accompanied by the seizure of additional territories beyond the occupation line.

⁸² Jackson, J. (2020). What's Behind Russia's Disinformation Campaign in Georgia? DW. available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/whats-behind-russias-disinformation-campaign-in-georgia/a-55708502>

⁸³ Interview #07

Threats from Russia to Georgia have been exacerbated by the resumption of full-scale military confrontations in Nagorno-Karabakh from September to November 2020 and the deployment of Russian troops in the region as a result of the war. Under a Moscow-brokered agreement, Russia received permission to deploy peacekeeping forces in Nagorno-Karabakh.⁸⁴ The presence of Russian military bases in occupied regions of Georgia as well as the Caucasus region further aggravates the country's security environment.

Economic Weakness

Along with Russian occupation, research respondents consider a weak economy and wrong economic development policy as the main threats to Georgia. Underdevelopment of the manufacturing sector, alarmingly high dependence on imports, insufficient monetary resources, and low global competitiveness⁸⁵ significantly hinder the accumulation of wealth, which in turn drives poverty and unemployment.

After the restoration of independence, the development of Georgia, like many other post-Soviet countries, was largely based on a single neoliberal economic doctrine, which included mass privatization of public resources, deregulation, minimization of the state's role in the economy, and liberalization of foreign trade. Despite high expectations, the Georgian economy is in a state of constant outflow of wealth, mainly due to deindustrialization and a large trade deficit.⁸⁶ Along with the deficit, the primitive export structure is also self-evident, where main export products are not characterized by complexity and high added value. At the same time, Georgia lags significantly behind countries with a similar level of development in terms of export diversification.^{87 88}

According to respondents, the inadequate diversity of export markets is risky for Georgia. Russia is an unreliable and dangerous trading partner and has repeatedly imposed politically motivated trade sanctions on Georgia, but yet remains the main destination for Georgian products after China.⁸⁹

Unfortunately, Georgia is also still not fully able to use the EU free trade regime to stimulate economic diversification.

According to the latest data, Georgia exported only raw or primary processing products to EU member states, while of the eleven most exported goods, three were of non-Georgian origin and were merely re-exports.⁹⁰

Inadequate Development of State Institutions

Respondents consider strong state institutions to be critical for Georgia to be a democratic country. Most believe that it will be impossible to deal with modern, complex threats at Georgia's current level of institutional development. Experts based their assessment on the argument that Georgia is a young democracy without solid political traditions and a continuum of institutional memory, which in turn leads to inconsistent decisions.

The state finds it difficult to attract highly qualified staff to state institutions due to limited financial resources, thus leading to inadequate development. There is a strong trend of outflow of qualified personnel from the public service to the private sector. However, the state does not have a regular practice of research-based decision-making that would significantly improve the effectiveness, purposefulness, and credibility of public policy. In this regard, Georgia is in a particularly deplorable situation. According to 2018 World Bank data, Georgia spends only 0.3% of its GDP on research and development,⁹¹ directly affecting the process of institution building.

MAJOR CHALLENGES TO PUBLIC SECURITY

Poverty and Unemployment

According to a public sentiment survey conducted by the Georgian National Democratic Institute (NDI), poverty and unemployment are constantly considered the most acute national issues.⁹² According to official data from 2020, 794,000 Georgian citizens, or 21.3% of the population live below the poverty line.⁹³ In 2020, against the background of the global pandemic, the number of recipients of targeted social assistance increased by 83,000, totaling 541,000 people on social assistance.⁹⁴

⁸⁴ BBC. (2020) Nagorno-Karabakh: Russia Deploys Peacekeeping Troops to Region. available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54885906>

⁸⁵ Godar, S. Khundadze, T. & Truger, A. (2018). Striving for Shared Prosperity. Tbilisi: Centre for Social Studies & Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

⁸⁶ Godar, S. Khundadze, T. & Truger, A. (2018). Striving for Shared Prosperity. Tbilisi: Centre for Social Studies & Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

⁸⁷ National Statistics Office of Georgia. (2020). Georgia's Foreign Trade. available at: https://www.geostat.ge/media/39340/External-Merchandise-Trade-2020_publication-2021.pdf

⁸⁸ Godar, S. Khundadze, T. & Truger, A. (2018). Striving for Shared Prosperity. Tbilisi: Centre for Social Studies & Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. p. 19

⁸⁹ National Statistics Office of Georgia. (2021). Local exports of Georgia. available at: <https://bit.ly/3ecvwx>

⁹⁰ Godar, S. Khundadze, T. & Truger, A. (2018). Striving for Shared Prosperity. Tbilisi: Centre for Social Studies & Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. p. 20

⁹¹ The World Bank. (2018). Research and Development Expenditure (% of GDP) – Georgia. available at: <https://bit.ly/3FjE3UW>

⁹² NDI Georgia. (2021) Public Attitude Survey in Georgia. available at: <https://bit.ly/3soo0Sr>

⁹³ Jam News. (2021). 21.3 Percent of the Population of Georgia is Below the Absolute Poverty Line. available at: <https://jam-news.net/ge/saqartvelos-mosakhleobis-21-3-sigharibis-absolutur-zghvars-qvevit-imyofeba/>

⁹⁴ Business Media Georgia. (2021). The Number of Recipients of Subsidence Allowance has Risen to a Record 541,000. available at: <https://bm.ge/ka/article/saarsebo-shemweobis-mimgbta-ricxvi-rekordul-nishnulamde---541000-mde-gaizarda/81737>

Against the background of poverty, the employment structure in Georgia is alarming. According to the National Statistics Office, the unemployment rate is 18.5%.⁹⁵ However, analysis of additional data shows that unemployment is much higher since a large part of the population specializes in low-wage and low-productivity sectors.⁹⁶ For example, 68.1% of the total workforce is employed while 31.9% are self-employed. Most of this self-employment traditionally comes from agriculture, which, according to the sectoral structure of GDP, accounts for only 8.4% of the economy.^{97 98}

According to respondents, this existing socio-economic situation poses a challenge to public safety. Poverty is one of the main factors contributing to the vulnerability of the Georgian population and is exacerbated by unemployment. As a result, part of society is so focused on survival and simply has neither the time nor the means, and in many cases, the willingness to concentrate on other issues and get involved in political processes beyond meeting basic daily needs.

Emigration

According to respondents, the biggest threat to solid public security after poverty and unemployment is the demographic situation, in particular, never-ending emigration. According to statistics, about 1.4 million people emigrated from Georgia between 2002 and 2017.⁹⁹ At the same time, labor emigration, one of the reasons for the outflow of population from Georgia, was mostly unorganized and illegal.¹⁰⁰ As a result, most illegal migrants work abroad in low-skilled and low-paid jobs, where discrimination and human rights abuses are common.¹⁰¹ As a result, Georgia does not have a strong, cohesive, and politically influential diaspora abroad, but only a group of vulnerable, fragmented emigrants who survive on low-skilled labor.

In addition to the sharp population decline, emigration is difficult for Georgia due to the outflow of the labor force, which plays an important role in the economic life of the country. Added to this is the “brain drain,” which results in the loss of qualified and promising citizens. In most cases these are young people, ultimately weakening prospects for the development of the local economy.

⁹⁵ National Statistics Office of Georgia. (2020). Labor Force Indicators. available at: <https://bit.ly/3J7x0Bd>

⁹⁶ Kakulia, M. Kapanadze, N. & Kurkhuli L. (2017). Chronic Poverty and Income Inequality in Georgia. Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies (Rondeli Foundation) & Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

⁹⁷ Godar, S. Khundadze, T. & Truger, A. (2018). Striving for Shared Prosperity. Tbilisi: Centre for Social Studies & Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. p. 16

⁹⁸ National Statistics Office of Georgia. (2021). Gross Domestic Product. available at: <https://www.geostat.ge/ka/modules/categories/23/mtliani-shida-produkti-mshp>

⁹⁹ REGinfo (2019). 1.4 million People Emigrated from Georgia in 15 Years. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3GYbX24>

¹⁰⁰ Diakonidze, A. (2018). Study of the Potential of Circular Migration of Georgian Labor Force in EU Countries. Government Commission on Migration Issues. p. 12

¹⁰¹ Diakonidze, A. (2018). Study of the Potential of Circular Migration of Georgian Labor Force in EU Countries. Government Commission on Migration Issues. p. 12

Social and Political Polarization

In analyzing the main threats to Georgian society, respondents think that the final but especially acute problem is the social and political polarization of society. In their view, the state fails to offer common, unifying ideas and goals that citizens would use to begin value-based consolidation. Based on the experience of western Europe, a consolidating goal in Georgia would be common prosperity and development that encompasses all sections of society and unites them to build a common welfare state.

The coherence of Georgian society is also hampered by alarming social inequality in the country. According to the latest 2018 World Bank data, after Turkey, Russia, and Bulgaria, the population of Georgia is the most unequal in terms of income in Europe.¹⁰² The existence of such radically different social realities in Georgia is unequivocally dangerous, as in a fragmented society where a lack of solidarity and trust is apparent, it is easier to provoke different types of conflicts by internal or external actors.

The growing political polarization in Georgia is intensifying fragmentation and division of society. According to respondents, such an extreme polarization of society on political grounds significantly increases the risk of civil strife and contributes to the feeling of instability in the country. As one respondent noted:

“The existing social environment in which these hysterical, insignificant political conflicts arise is so unpredictable, manipulative, and so isolated from real life that it is inconceivable to plan and participate in any kind of slightly stable or long-term political process.”¹⁰³

Thus, Georgia, as a small state with limited resources, has many problems to solve in order to protect and strengthen its statehood. The situation is especially complicated by the fact that the country deals with a difficult geopolitical environment and internal challenges at the same time. Consequently, it is increasingly important to adopt a holistic security model so the state and society contain existential threats together.

¹⁰² The World Bank. (2018). Gini index. available at: <https://bit.ly/3qf5LMn>

¹⁰³ Interview #18

3

IN SEARCH OF INCLUSIVE SECURITY POLICYMAKING

The process of inclusive and trust-based decision-making is crucial for the effective functioning of any country. Consequently, in light of existential threats facing Georgia and the resources at its disposal, closer cooperation between state and society is even more important. The need for such cooperation is primarily based on the underlying theoretical assumption that the state can no longer contain modern threats without active support from a strong, consolidated, resilient society.

The research process clearly showed that most respondents highlight the importance of inclusive planning and implementation of security policy. After the restoration of independence, and based on recommendations and engagement from western partners, efforts to increase inclusiveness in building and reforming the security sector continue to this day. However, the real picture is different from what is desired. Hence, this chapter takes a look at those challenges that hinder inclusive security policymaking ranging from the lack of long-term vision to the weakness of institutions to the elitism of the process.

SECURITY POLICY PLANNING AND INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

According to most research respondents, planning and implementing security policy in Georgia is accompanied by shortcomings due to several important factors. First, the structural and legislative changes brought about by the constitutional model have had a negative impact on national security policy planning consistency. In 2013, the transition from a presidential to a mixed parliamentary model and then full change to a parliamentary model in 2018 led to a shift in commitments, responsibilities, and functions in the development of a unified security policy as actual implementation is a time-consuming process. Until 2018 the main coordinating body, the National Security Council, was subordinate to the President. After 2018, as a result of the reform it was abolished, and the new chairman of the National Security Council became the Prime Minister.¹⁰⁴ It is true that

the new model eliminated fragmented responsibilities within the executive branch. Two duplicate advisory bodies, the State Security and Crisis Management Council created by the Prime Minister in 2014, and the newly formed National Defense Council created confusion and mistrust. According to the Constitution, the State Security and Crisis Management Council is a non-permanent deliberative body, which convenes during a state of war and is headed by the President of Georgia. As a result, respondents estimate that in the event of political disagreement between the president and the government, there have been and will be additional risks to consensus and coordination.

The second significant factor that hinders long-term planning of security policy and, at the same time is the result of improper planning, is the obsolescence of national-level strategic and conceptual security documents. The National Security Concept, the founding document that outlines the national security policy and vision for safe development, was last updated in 2011.¹⁰⁵ The situation is similar to the Georgian Threat Assessment Document which identifies threats facing Georgia and reflects the military, foreign policy, domestic, hybrid, transnational, socio-economic, natural, and man-made threats to national security. The secret part of the document was last updated in 2015, while the open part only covers the years 2010 to 2013.¹⁰⁶

Unlike these conceptual national-level documents, the agency-level Strategic Defense Review prepared by the Ministry of Defense is regularly updated and its latest version covers the years 2021-2025. This document is a guiding document of the Georgian Ministry of Defense in the medium term and describes threats to the security environment as well as challenges facing the Ministry and ways to overcome them.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Legislative Herald of Georgia. (2020). Law of Georgia on National Security Policy Planning and Coordination. available at: <https://bit.ly/3qfwhFt>

¹⁰⁵ Georgian National Security Concept. (2011). available at: <https://bit.ly/3A9mqE2>

¹⁰⁶ National Security Council (2021). Information About the Hazard Assessment Document. available at: <https://bit.ly/3A4Zk1r>

¹⁰⁷ Ministry of Defense of Georgia (2021). Strategic Defense Review 2021-2025. available at: https://mod.gov.ge/uploads/uploads/MoD_SDR_2021-2025.pdf

Despite efforts of specific agencies, respondents estimate that the current situation remains problematic, as Georgia has national-level conceptual documents that do not fit the current international situation and fail to meet the modern challenges of an ever-changing security environment.

The third condition that limits security policy planning effectiveness and coordination is the institutional immaturity of the main coordinating body, the National Security Council. According to respondents, this is mostly due to two reasons: weak political support and conflict of interest caused by the council structure itself. In the first case, improper political will implies that the involvement of decision-makers is lacking. According to respondents, this is primarily manifested by irregular council meetings. While meetings should be held at least once every three months, only five meetings were held within twenty-eight months of the first council meeting.¹⁰⁸ Weak political support also prevents the council from acting as a strong coordinator.

Conflict of interest caused by the structure of the Council suggests that there is an argument that the Secretary of the Council is not an independent actor, but one of its permanent members. As one respondent noted:

“We do not have a secretary of the council, but he is the minister of one of the ministries, which a priori means that he will always put the interests of his agency in the foreground in the process of national security planning. Even if they approached the issue neutrally, (the) outcome would still be the same.”¹⁰⁹

In addition to possible conflicts of interest, combining the position of Secretary of the National Security Council with a ministerial portfolio also poses functional risks. According to the same respondent:

“It is inconceivable for one person in a country with such a complex environment to hold two such positions and responsibilities in parallel. In practice, it turns out that the secretary of the council, who is a political figure on the one hand because he is the advisor to the prime minister and on the other hand is the bureaucrat because he has to run the council, has no time for it because he is mostly focused on this ministry and he can neither act as an advisor nor a bureaucrat. This is a very serious problem and does not help the national security planning.”¹¹⁰

Thus, today, security policy planning and inter-agency coordination in Georgia face challenges, which hide significant political and institutional factors.

PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT AND CONTROL OVER THE SECURITY SECTOR

Parliament, with its unique representative nature, is a vital element of the proper functioning of a democratic state. With many different functions, the constant exercise of its power by parliament - to control the government and make it accountable to the people - is one of the key indicators of inclusive political life in the country.

As a result of many years of reforms and transition to a parliamentary system of government, the Parliament of Georgia has significantly improved its oversight and control mechanisms, including in the field of security. According to the 2017 amendments to the Constitution of Georgia and the updated Rules of Procedure of the Parliament, the activities of agencies within the Defense and Security Sector of Georgia are controlled by the Parliament through the Defense and Security Committee, the Trust Group, and other sectoral specialization committees.¹¹¹ The most important of these mechanisms is the Trust Group, which is the only structure with the right to access secret files. The Trust Group consists of five members, one of whom is the chairman of the Parliamentary Committee of Defense and Security, and two members each are from the parliamentary majority and the opposition.¹¹² The group has the right to request information from agencies in the defense and security sectors, monitor covert and non-secret public procurement, inspect the work of relevant agencies, and other similar actions.

Despite improved procedures, research respondents estimate that in reality, parliamentary oversight and control over the security sector remains weak. In their view, there are three main reasons behind this problem. The first is related to the peculiarity of the Georgian political landscape, where public discussion or criticism of the security field, and especially the defense policy planning process, is politically unprofitable and, consequently, uninteresting. Added to this is the lack of relevant expertise. In particular, most members of the parliament do not have adequate knowledge and experience in the field of national security.¹¹³ At the same time, issues related to security planning and implementation are not a priority in the programs of political parties, and they are rarely discussed during the pre-election period.

The second reason is the traditional lack of institutional and political parliamentary oversight and control. Against the background of weak accountability, respondents estimate that the legislative government is perceived as an ‘extended arm’¹¹⁴ of the executive one. However, some respondents acknowledge that establishing a tradition of parliamentary

¹⁰⁸ As of 15.10.2021

¹⁰⁹ Interview #11

¹¹⁰ Interview #11

¹¹¹ Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of Georgia. available at: <https://bit.ly/3pcbovA>

¹¹² Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of Georgia. available at: <https://bit.ly/3pcbovA>

¹¹³ Interview #05

¹¹⁴ Interview #08

control requires time and a culture of political consensus. According to the former MP:

“Parliamentary control must be a tradition and it takes years. This is not a general inspection; this is a desire to see the problems and take care of correcting these shortcomings. Parliamentary control is more and more perceived among politicians and people to find a disadvantage and to blame someone for this shortcoming. When we see a problem, two camps are formed - one cursing, the other defending, but the fact that this problem belongs to all of us and let’s fix it and use the control mechanism together - is lost.”¹¹⁵

The third important factor behind weak parliamentary oversight and control is purely technical. Due to the large size of the field and the diversity of issues, the Defense and Security Committee finds it difficult to properly perform its duties, as, given the scarcity of human resources, it is impossible for committee members to both refine legislation and analyze security policies, infrastructure, or procurement.¹¹⁶

Given these arguments, along with the improvement of regulations on parliamentary oversight and control over the security sector, it is critical to apply them in practice and strengthen accountability. As one of the respondents noted, defense is a service that is measured by people during war, although it is already delayed during war, so it needs some daily control as just as do the health or education sectors.¹¹⁷

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND SECURITY DECENTRALIZATION

The analysis of Scandinavian models of societal security has clearly shown how much attention is paid to broad public participation in security policy and decentralization at the municipal level. The role of local self-governments is especially great in the field of civil defense, where the quality of First Responder¹¹⁸ preparedness and resource allocation become crucial in dealing with crises.

In Georgia, as in many other political processes, the role of local governments in the security sphere is limited. According to one respondent, a researcher of post-Soviet democratic transformation, the fundamental reason for this is the general structure of Georgian decentralization itself. Despite a number of reforms, the autonomy of municipalities remains illusory, as they are unable to manage the economic resources of their region, and hence the local population has a low interest in political participation and collective action.¹¹⁹ In turn, this situation leads to the weakness of institutions at the municipal level and the crisis of competencies,

which further strengthens their dependence on the central government.

Beyond structural factors, respondents believe that real decentralization is hampered by fears of weakening central control over the regions, especially by the security services, where the traditional understanding of security and degree of centralization are still strong. As one respondent noted:

“Restraining modern threats requires strong self-government, but here fears of separatism arise. This is a primitive approach of a young country where people working in (the) security field think the country needs a firm hand.”¹²⁰

Based on these assessments, it can be said that the existing vertical hierarchy of centralization in Georgia is so strong that the role of local municipalities in counteracting the emergence of possible crises is vague and incomprehensible. Consequently, isolating this branch of government from the security sector significantly weakens the degree of policy inclusiveness and the ability to deal immediately with crises.

ENGAGEMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The limited involvement of Georgian civil and academic society in the development and implementation of security policy is another challenge. Since the 1990s, there have been numerous attempts to establish systematic cooperation between the state and civil society to share knowledge and experience in the field of security. However, the implementation of Western-style security policymaking based on the engagement of the state, civil society, academia, private sector, and civil institutions has failed. The failure is due to several reasons.

In the field of security, the relationship between the civil sector and the state is not marked by a desire for cooperation, largely the result of a lack of trust in each other’s goals and competencies. According to research respondents, meetings for the exchange of knowledge and experience between them often take place in formats funded by foreign partnerships, and cooperation is largely simulated.¹²¹

There is also a serious challenge in terms of security policy research and training. Until recently, there was no Georgian university program in security education. Knowledge generation is almost non-existent in scientific and academic institutions, which, in addition to leaving national security policy without an intellectual base and support, fails to educate and develop young security personnel. Due to the theoretical and conceptual scarcity, the field is mainly based on the emergence of dominant international models, some of which are anachronistic, and some are inappropriate for the Georgian context due to the size of the country, geopolitical location, resource availability, and strategic reality.

¹¹⁵ Interview #17

¹¹⁶ Interview #08

¹¹⁷ Interview #07

¹¹⁸ These include police officers, medical workers, firefighters, etc.

¹¹⁹ Interview #03

¹²⁰ Interview #01

¹²¹ Interview #02 & Interview #06

In addition, over the decades, security policy has evolved into an elitist sphere monopolized by analytical circles, and general public participation in security discourse is extremely limited. As a result, a 'closed circle' has formed where there is almost no renewal either in terms of human resources or ideas.

ENGAGEMENT OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Involvement of private sector security policy implementation is a vital element of societal security. In Georgia, as in other areas, business participation in the security field is quite limited. While the country is becoming increasingly aware of private-sector responsibility to influence the public and the state, its role in dealing with crises and threats is still unclear.

According to respondents, this problem is based on the bitter experience that Georgia gained in the 1990s, when, like other post-Soviet countries, the planned economy was rapidly transformed into a market economy by rigid methods.¹²² In turn, this economic transformation, where privatization was driven by 'grabbing' methods, cut off businesses from the state-building process. Consequently, such alienation between the private sector and society resulted in inertia, the specialization in low-productivity and non-innovative sectors of the economy, and the abuse of workers' rights. This resulted in a significant impact on public confidence in business and its place in the social and political life of the country, an important part of ensuring common security.¹²³

Thus, against the background of the existing problems, Georgia faces many challenges in terms of inclusive planning and implementation of security policy which requires more attention from the state. It is noteworthy that citizens' sense of security policy elitism affects their political confidence, knowledge, and motivation to be part of the common security space and therefore to play their part in preventing or managing possible crises.

Poverty and social inequality, which have weakened and fragmented Georgian society over the past three decades, require special attention not only in economic or socio-political terms but also in terms of security. Consequently, it will be very difficult for the Georgian state to protect society and deal with modern threats and challenges without drastically improving the well-being of the population.

Interview analysis conducted within the frames of this study clearly shows that in the case of Georgia, poverty and social inequality with their associated discontents may contribute to strengthening existing challenges and the emergence of new types of threats. Particularly important are the dangerous combinations that poverty and inequality can create in a country like Georgia. With two occupied regions, the

country is systematically subjected to cyber and information attacks by Russia. As a result, society lacks trust in public institutions, and the integration level of minorities remains low. In addition, it is a significant challenge that the dominant narratives fail to perceive poverty and social inequality as security challenges and to understand the impact of the above-mentioned social problems on the proper functioning of society and its resilience.

¹²² Interview #03

¹²³ Interview #03

4

POVERTY AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY AS A SECURITY CHALLENGE FOR GEORGIA

POVERTY AND THREATS DERIVING FROM IT

According to research respondents, the primary threat from poverty is related to the decline of human capital. Poverty accompanied by inadequate healthcare, nutrition, living conditions, and social ties significantly determines access to basic and higher education. In turn, a low level of education has a negative impact on all other processes in the country, especially where education is directly related to raising civic responsibility, strengthening resilience, and developing the ability to overcome the crisis.

Besides that, poverty has a direct negative impact on political life. According to respondents, the poor population sector is nihilist about politics and does not see it as a mechanism for radical change. This in turn destroys the system of participatory democracy and weakens democratic values in the country in the long run. On the other hand, the poor society finds it increasingly difficult to produce substantive policies and, consequently, is doomed to periodic street rallies and political traps of populist leaders.

At the same time, the steady stream of emigration caused by poverty automatically shuts off a certain part of citizens from public life as it pushes them to physically leave the country. Many of them go abroad angry, demoralized, and frustrated because they have not been able to establish a decent place in their homeland. It destroys the trust of its citizens towards the state and has a negative impact on the country's international reputation. Overall, the growing perception is that if a country is unable to provide social security for its own population, it will be difficult to provide the population's physical security as well.

Added to this is the fact that there is no government institution directly responsible and accountable for unemployment in Georgia. Consequently, the part of society left to face poverty feels abandoned by the state. In the event of a social crisis, there is a major threat that citizens will lose their motivation to fight to defend a state that fails to ensure their well-being and security. In some cases, the despair caused by social problems can be so intense that it can even push the citizen to take radical measures. According to one of the respondents:

“People know that fighting must be worthwhile, you must have something to lose. If you do not like your current situation so much that you are ready to exchange freedom for something, this is a serious security problem. The second thing that has to do with poverty is that poor people do not have the will to fight. On the one hand, because they have nothing to lose, while on the other, it is so difficult for them to think about the skills how to improve their safety.”¹²⁴

According to respondents, the difficult social environment is equally depressing for both people living in the capital or near the occupation line. Economic hardship remains a main problem for these populations even under increased military threats. According to one of the security researchers:

“Even those living near the occupation line cannot think about security due to the difficult economic conditions. Their first thought is how to provide (for) their children and not the fact the tanks might take over the next day. For him, the priority is something else and in such a situation the engagement of the society also decreases.”¹²⁵

Along with fragmenting and weakening society, poverty also threatens the development of the defense forces. Two main factors need to be emphasized in this regard. First, due to the scarcity of economic wealth, state funding for the defense sector is limited. Consequently, the state cannot equip the defense forces with the latest technologies and expensive weapons, which hinders the process of defense modernization. The second factor is related to the low resistance capacity of the poor society behind the army. In addition to the fact that the population replenishes the military forces, in case of crisis, it is society that should strengthen the backs of the army. In a part of a society tired of daily social problems, the desire, ability, and competence to fulfill this obligation are very low. According to one of the respondents, “the army is a reflection of society.”¹²⁶ Consequently, every major social challenge, be it poverty, education, healthcare, or emigration, has a direct impact on recruitment and troop qualifications.

¹²⁴ Interview #07

¹²⁵ Interview #02

¹²⁶ Interview #08

The next threat related to poverty is vulnerability to public propaganda and misinformation. The societal dissatisfaction accumulated by a difficult social background can easily be manipulated by external actors and cause significant fluctuations within the country. At the same time, according to respondents, different information conduits in Georgia often coincide with social boundaries, directly indicating the connection between these two factors. In addition, a disinformation campaign against the background of poverty can jeopardize the citizens' confidence in the country's Euro-Atlantic course. In the face of unchanging social problems, the Russian disinformation machine makes it easier to discredit the country's Euro-Atlantic aspirations, with the constant emphasis that EU integration does not result in improving the material well-being of the population. This may be easy to believe for people who do not feel the benefits of rapprochement with the EU. Last but not importantly, respondents estimate the threats directly related to poverty are the risk of radicalization and violent extremism in Georgia. According to security researchers, parts of the socially disadvantaged society are particularly vulnerable to various types of radicalizations, be it manipulation of ultra-right nationalist ideas or stirring up religious fundamentalism. According to one respondent:

"Where there is poverty there is also radicalization. If someone who is radically inclined becomes a leader in such a place, his words become a priority. In addition, poor people are becoming vulnerable to foreign special services. Anyone who can be offered 1000-2000 GEL can go for something they cannot even realize how much harm this action does. So, of course, poverty is directly linked to security."¹²⁷

Thus, threats facing the Georgian state and society are becoming even more diverse in light of the current social situation. Poverty poses risks that in the long run will further complicate the achievement of the main societal security goal in Georgia society of acquiring the ability to maintain resilience in a changing environment and to be able to function and develop in the face of possible or actual threats.

SOCIAL INEQUALITY AND THREATS DERIVING FROM IT

In previous chapters of the study, it was noted that Georgia is one of the leaders in Europe in terms of social inequality and this poses significant security challenges. According to survey respondents, income inequality and the almost complete absence of a middle class in Georgia primarily lead to a social and value fragmentation of society. The gap between rich and extremely poor lacks a connecting bridge due to the scarcity of the middle class. In a such fragmented society, several parallel realities start to develop. In turn, this reality leads to the most important security problem, manifested as distrust within the society and alienation between society and state.

¹²⁷ Interview #15

According to a large-scale study conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2016-2017, trust, a cornerstone of social capital, is largely based on social norms and social well-being.¹²⁸ Trust between people and trust in state institutions is the basis for social and economic progress, as it is directly linked to tackling social problems, economic growth, quality health care, reduced crime rates, and subjective perception of a better standard of living.¹²⁹ In this context, according to respondents, the Georgian social situation and the social inequality in its epicenter have a negative impact on the confidence factor. This then is associated with several security risks.

The first threat is the delegitimization of state institutions and the diminishing role of the state as the main unifying institution in the eyes of the public. The accumulated skepticism and low trust in the society towards the executive, legislative, and judicial authorities¹³⁰ are alarming, as they create a precondition for the alienation between the government and the citizens. According to one respondent, this is because, since the 1990s, the Georgian government and the privileged strata of society have been associated with each other. Therefore anything related to privilege and power is automatically linked to the state, further weakening the latter's authority and trust within the poor population.¹³¹

The second threat is weakening public confidence in the military, greatly contributing to social inequality. According to one respondent, a researcher in the field of security, social inequality feeds the existing practice of military conscription, creating an unhealthy atmosphere regarding the army and provoking public protest. According to this researcher, social inequality will negatively affect the qualifications of the army:

"We understand that society is divided into social strata. If we take the component of the army, it is filled with ordinary citizens. Social inequality can end here with a very bad result because educated and wealthy people do not join the Georgian army. In this case, the army comes out as the so-called 'shelter for the homeless."¹³²

In addition to stirring up distrust, social inequality also increases the risk of confrontation within society. According to respondents, against the background of sharp income inequality and the weakness of the middle class, the sense of unity in different groups of society weakens. This intensifies the crisis of solidarity and a sense of exclusion and deprivation, making it easier to provoke civil conflict on social grounds. The threat of social tension and conflict becomes

¹²⁸ Murtin, F., et al. (2018), Trust and its determinants: Evidence from the Trustlab experiment, OECD Statistics Working Papers No. 2018/02

¹²⁹ Murtin, F., et al. (2018), Trust and its determinants: Evidence from the Trustlab experiment, OECD Statistics Working Papers No. 2018/02

¹³⁰ Caucasus Barometer (2020). Trust – Executive Government. available at: <https://bit.ly/3EawsH2>

¹³¹ Interview #07

¹³² Interview #08

stronger in a multicultural environment if social inequality coincides with the ethnic or religious ‘boundaries’ of minorities. In this case, the sense of injustice may be more intense, and the political manipulation of dissatisfaction simpler.¹³³

SECURITIZATION OF POVERTY AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY IN GEORGIA

Given the threats discussed above, it is vital for Georgia to pursue progressive social policy and see the need from a security perspective. This will allow the state to both eliminate existing problems and prevent potential threats. Nevertheless, the study respondents unanimously note that the problems of perception of poverty and inequality in the Georgian political reality are almost non-existent. This is due to several reasons.

The first reason is the country’s prevailing paradigm, which leaves no room for a new understanding of security. According to respondents, the existing paradigm, based on the traditional analysis of security, completely equates it with the military and law enforcement sector, now considered an outdated and ineffective approach. According to one respondent:

“The threat is perceived only from a military point of view. It is not understood that no one will need to use force on you anymore, when you become fragmented and disintegrated from within. Hence, it needs a proper vision.”¹³⁴

The existing paradigm is strong in the Georgian academic space as well, limiting the different views of scientific research and its acceptance among decision-makers. According to one professor:

“The academic sector also has a significant impact in this regard, there are no studies that would securitize social problems. Consequently, when there is no topic, there is no problem and it cannot be lobbied. The academic sector should at least start raising the issue, partnering with Western organizations, and then lobbying to go to the top.”¹³⁵

Another important reason why poverty and social inequality are not perceived as a Georgian security problem is related to the country’s economic ideology and its exclusiveness. According to neoliberal ideology, poverty in the country is perceived as a private problem of individuals. Poverty is not generalized or seen as a common social challenge. At the same time, the increasing role of the state in the economy, promoting anti-inequality regulations, and the expansion of welfare programs in the fight against poverty became not only an unacceptable model but to discredit it among the

public, was aggressively linked to the Soviet past. Consequently, even mentioning the model of the welfare state in political, analytical, or academic discourse has become risky. According to respondents, another notable reason why it is not possible to see poverty and inequality as a Georgian security problem is the lack of preventive approaches in the local political tradition. According to the respondents, Georgia learns lessons from precedents and crises and drives significant changes based on them. Consequently, the challenges related to poverty and social inequality are not properly perceived because despite the high risks, neither condition has yet posed an existential threat to the state and there is no precedent of “bitter experience.”

Thus, poverty and social inequality, the main determinants of the vulnerability of Georgian society, create and reinforce deep and complex security challenges. Against the background of a fragmented society tired of social problems, and in the face of modern threats, it is increasingly difficult to unite the state and its citizens in the process of protecting the country’s security. In this regard, the support of a resilient, consolidated society becomes vital for the Georgian state which has extremely limited resources and endures one of the most difficult geopolitical environments.

¹³³ Interview #11

¹³⁴ Interview #11

¹³⁵ Interview #05

Conclusion

The recent history of independent Georgia over the past thirty years has shown that the traditional model of security is insufficient to successfully contain a wide range of threats facing the country. Today when the target of the attack is no longer just the state territory but also the destruction of public institutions and values, and manipulation of attitudes, the Georgian state is finding it increasingly difficult to deal with these hybrid threats using the existing security model. That is why it is important to study relevant modern security approaches, which inspire the country to identify the optimum security model and adapt it to the Georgian reality.

In light of the need to study modern security approaches, this research aimed to introduce the concept of societal security to the Georgian discussion space and connect it with Georgian reality. The study assumed that societal security is a promising model for Georgia, given its advantages. According to societal security, the state should focus on ensuring social welfare while strengthening inclusiveness, decentralization, threat prevention, and raising public resilience. These can significantly help to increase the Georgian defense capacity, which faces unusually variegated conventional and unconventional threats compared to its size.

Against the background of such a difficult task, it is increasingly important for Georgia to improve the coherence between state and society and to adapt to the inclusive and holistic security model. For its part, data analysis has shown that societal security can be a very model which is not a luxury relevant only for developed countries, but rather an inevitable need for Georgia.

In this sense, research has shown that improving the well-being of the Georgian population and eliminating the ongoing socio-economic crisis, one of the main causes of social divisions for decades, will be crucial for such adaptation. However, the identification of concrete mechanisms for adapting the social security model in the Georgian context is associated with many difficulties at this stage. In particular, there is a significant lack of political will and long-term vision, and democracy in planning and developing security policy, which hinders the rethinking of the existing security model and subsequent initiation of appropriate transformation. In addition, the study revealed that the condition of poverty and

social inequality is not perceived as security-related challenges in Georgian governmental, analytical, and academic circles, mainly due to the dominant socio-economic ideology of the country.

As a result, the traditional state-centric approach to security in Georgia remains a leading paradigm, and socio-economic issues remain beyond security policy. This hinders the introduction of a unified public model of security, as it is not possible to ensure the broad involvement of the population in the processes. Nevertheless, the need for adaptation of societal security in Georgia requires further study of the model and the accumulation of a critical mass of knowledge, which can prepare the ground for the securitization of social welfare in Georgia and as a consequence can strengthen the political will and cultivate public readiness on the local level.

APPENDIX 1

Information about the respondents

- 1 Interview # 01, Security Expert, Lecturer, 10/02/2021
- 2 Interview # 02, Security Expert, Former Public Servant, 17/02/2021
- 3 Interview # 03, Post-Soviet Transformation Researcher, Lecturer, 18/02/2021
- 4 Interview # 04, Security Expert, Public Servant, 22/02/2021
- 5 Interview # 05, Member of the Parliament of Georgia, 24/02/2021
- 6 Interview # 06, Security Expert, Lecturer, 11/03/2021
- 7 Interview # 07, Civil Servant, 16/03/2021
- 8 Interview # 08, Security Expert, Former Public Servant, 25/03/2021
- 9 Interview # 09, Security Expert, 02/04/2021
- 10 Interview # 10, Security Expert, Former Public Servant, 06/04/2021
- 11 Interview # 11, Security Expert, Former Public Servant, 13/04/2021
- 12 Interview # 12, Security Expert, Former Member of Parliament, 15/04/2021
- 13 Interview # 13, Security Expert, Former Public Servant, 25/04/2021
- 14 Interview # 14, Security Expert, Lecturer, 19/05/2021
- 15 Interview # 15, Member of the Parliament of Georgia, 22/05/2021
- 16 Interview # 16, Security Expert, 02/06/2021
- 17 Interview # 17, Security Expert, Former Member of the Parliament of Georgia, 09/06/2021
- 18 Interview # 18, Political Economist, 16/07/2021
- 19 Interview # 19, International Relations Specialist, 26/07/2021
- 20 Interview # 20, Political Economist, 02/08/2021

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ivane Abramashvili is the head of the Peace Program at Caucasian House. His professional focus is on researching the past and present of Georgian-Abkhaz and Georgian-South Ossetian conflicts. He is an author of several analytical publications dealing with peace and conflicts in the South Caucasus.

Academically, Ivane earned an MA degree in Diplomacy and International Politics from Tbilisi State University and studied at the EU-Russia Studies Program at the University of Tartu, Estonia, and Conflict Resolution in the Cross-Cultural Perspective Program at the University of California, Irvine.

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Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung | Tbilisi Office
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Responsible: Felix Hett | Director,
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Tel.: +995 32 225 07 28

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PERSPECTIVES OF SOCIETAL SECURITY IN GEORGIA



Civil and academic society is inadequately involved in the development and implementation of the security policy due to the field's elitism, weak cooperation between state and society, and the backwardness of academic security policy research.



Threats related to social inequality in Georgia include fragmentation of society, increased risk of confrontation within society, weakened role of the state as the main unifying institution, and decreased public confidence in the defense forces in the long run.



The study found that the securitization of poverty and inequality is almost non-existent in the Georgian political reality. This is directly related to the strength of the traditional security paradigm in political and academic circles, the dominance of neoliberal economic ideology, and the deficit of preventive policies.

More information under this link:
<https://southcaucasus.fes.de/>