

# Intrastate cultural and socio-political influences and the realisation of national security: A two-level correlational analysis

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## Abstract

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*This paper aims to examine how specific domestic social, political, and cultural motives affect the formation and implementation of national security agendas. The following assumptions drive the research rationale behind this essay: Security-making processes are considered non-similar among states due to different domestic political processes, cultural discourses, and socialisation patterns. Therefore, national security agents are constantly being guided by various intrastate settings, which construct attitudes that are ultimately reflected in policy formation and implementation through strategic behavioural manifestations. The realisation of national security is thus dependent on each state actor's existent strategic culture, and given that, such choices cannot be contemplated in a strictly rational way. The methods of literature review and multi-layered analysis are applied throughout this study. In particular, this text's reasoning is based on contextualisation, identification, categorisation of variables, and correlational implications. In relation to the findings, the theoretical examination of the objects assessed provides adequate clarification on the interaction between the domestic motives, decision-makers' perspectives, and strategic cultural manifestations. Specifically, it was critically identified that the two last concepts can have a complementary function during security-making processes, hence producing unique outcomes for each state actor. Consequently, this paper wishes to contribute by giving direction for future research and broader methodological implications on the role of intrastate socio-political and cultural motives as sources of strategic culture and determinants of national security-making attitudes; without ignoring other factors that can respectively affect the aforementioned schemes.*

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### Keywords:

decision-making, national security realisation, political factors, security socialisation, cultural discourse

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## Introduction

The need to interpret and predict the interaction between global system actors remains a constant scholarly debate in International Relations (IR) and Security Studies (ISS). Contemporary conceptual analyses, therefore, tend to supplement traditional theories with more multi-dimensional approaches in order to diagnose the variety of factors that lead to specific fundamental strategic behavioural indications at the interstate and intrastate level. As Beyer accurately points out:

*International Relations are inherently concerned with relations amongst human beings, mostly seen as large-scale groupings of individuals such as nation states. As a social science, IR therefore is concerned with the common questions that other social sciences are concerned with as well* (Beyer, 2017, p. 10).

Correspondingly, the respective scholarship has gravitated towards expanding research into the subjects and reference objects, as a necessary condition, to a more interdisciplinary examination of threat, conflict, and security perceptions and understandings in world politics. Likewise, modern researchers have tried to diagnose the international system's complexity rather than clinging to a rational, but restrictive, structural understanding of the world. This condition expedites the need for further and more detailed examination of policy and decision-making processes for each actor in the prism of national security agendas. If extended to the interstate system, the resulting conclusions might therefore more satisfactorily compose the canvas of global politics.

National, or state, security strategies tend to follow a relatively universal pattern, being summed up in the initial requirement to safeguard national interests, leading to institutional imprints of respective policies and, eventually, to the implementation of particular objectives. This entire procedure relies on decision-making processes. However, assuming this whole practice is evaluated for each particular actor, it neither enjoys similar characteristics nor bears comparable outcomes, despite it being adequately alike. Therefore, some insiders suppose that this paradox is caused by each actor's distinct strategic behavioural manifestations, which stem from different political or strategic cultural determinants (Gray, 2016, pp. 95–109; Lantis, 2009, pp. 41–42).

This essay seeks to answer the following research question: By what means do domestic cultural and socio-political schemes influence the accomplishment of national security agendas. Given the above, this text initially delves into the concept of strategic culture, which is assumed to explicate the essence behind state security behavioural expressions. Moreover, trying to examine the research issue, this paper emphasises the role of the schemes mentioned above on decision-making processes, thus presenting a two-level analysis regarding both the broader strategic cultural context and the perspectives and values of the agents involved. It should be clarified that the present formalities may not necessarily be limited to defence and security policies since respective strategic behaviour might as well be observed in foreign policies. General formalities that intend to include the broadest national security strategic framework possible are, therefore, preferred.

This text is separated into three sections. To examine this study's central question, section 1 meets the necessary theoretical and methodological clarifications and establishes strategic culture as the primary research context. Section 2 is concerned with underlining the specific sociological, cultural, and political influences that are presumed to affect decision-makers' attitudes during policy formation and implementation. The final chapter draws upon the entire text, tying up the previous theoretical and critical strands aiming to (i) introduce the above influences into the context of strategic culture, (ii)

assess the process by which they interface with the realisation of national security agendas, and, eventually, (iii) evaluate their significance.

## Theorising Strategic Culture as the General Research Context

Before discussing the necessary theoretical and methodological assumptions, it was initially determined that this essay agrees with “discursive conceptions” on security. Buzan and Hansen define the latter term as:

*the process through which particular “threats” manifest themselves as security problems on the political agenda. “Threats” in that sense are “objective” when they are accepted by significant political actors, not because they have an inherent threatening status. Security is, in short, a self-referential practice* (Buzan and Hansen, 2009, p. 34).

Given the above, one might think that national security perspectives can defer from one actor to another due to non-similar political or cultural settings. Gray (1999, p. 52) explains that every societal action on security represents an illustration of strategic preferences affected by individual, organisational, normative, and other cultural variables or, generally, an indication of specific strategic culture. Likewise, in discursive readings, threat and security perceptions are supposed to be “influenced by a state’s (...) (discursive) reactions it generates from others, internationally and domestically” (Buzan and Hansen, 2009, p. 34).

The significant role of intrastate variables in analysing transnational relations is a relatively novel and popular political scientific approach. It derives from the supposition that domestic cultural factors structure strategic behaviour and institutional imprints, which are ultimately reflected in the internal, regional, and international system (Murden, 2011, pp. 417–418). Thereby, Glenn (2009, p. 523) explains that “there has been a resurgence of interest in strategic culture and the potential insights it offers in explaining state behaviour,” given that “writers are seeking to develop a richer account of the international environment than the one derived from Waltzian neo-realism.”

It is, however, noted that the existence of the second word in the term “strategic culture” acquires a specific meaning. Namely, it represents a set of motives, which can, with post-materialist criteria (especially for constructivist strategic culturists) explain the “inner sanctum” of the formation of national security agendas and implementation processes. In other words, strategic culture is supposed to constitute a general contextual entity that forms multi-level state strategic behaviour (Gray, 1999, p. 50). Even though social, political, and cultural characteristics may not be directly associated with state strategic planning, it is oversimplified to assume that policymakers will eventually be unaffected (Gray, 2014, p. 203). As Hinton explains, the strategic culture theory:

*looks to show that states approach strategic issues differently due to their own lived experiences. The theory “is based on the understanding that states are predisposed by their historical experiences, political systems, and cultures to deal with security issues in a particular way”* (Hinton, 2020, p. 81).

Subsequently, the concept is expected to provide an insight into the qualitative characteristics of national security strategic expressions. Similarly, it might offer many answers to questions that arise from the need to further explain the socio-political foundations of state behaviour in security politics, both on the domestic and international level.

Yet, the strategic culture theory lacks a holistic theoretical and methodological approach, as several debates have already been built since the first generation of scholars. The “positivist vs. interpretative” model confrontation remains at the heart of interest, as it is concerned with “the core ontological and epistemological issues” (Anand, 2020, p. 200). Bloomfield’s (2012, pp. 443–446) analysis provides a coherent view on this debate: On the one hand, positivist models handle the concept as an *inter alia* or independent variable when it comes to explaining strategic behaviour and choices. On the other hand, contextual interpretative models treat the concept as a set of values that indirectly guide the agents in specific directions. Although there is no broadly accepted view so far, as to what the concept ought to represent, this does not discourage its dynamics or the need for further study. For reasons of clarity, this paper consents with strategic culture’s contextual interpretation character.

In addition, it should be specified here that the very first theoretical conceptions of strategic culture re-examined how states (and state agents to an extent) embrace military doctrines and war policies, frameworks which are, to a degree, theorised as the capstone of discussions on the realisation of national security strategies. In other words, they introduced an innovative argumentation on how states tend to project their military power or perceive national rivalries and conflicts. In particular, the first generation of analysts (late 1970s to early 1980s) sought to implicate a disconnection between monolithic strategic thinking, and mere rationalism and materialism, by introducing nuclear strategic choices in the milieu of cultural approaches in anthropological and social sciences (Uz Zaman, 2009, p. 76). Although the second generation of scholars (mid-1980s) had not diverged from certain realistic principles upon the strategic confrontations among states, it introduced an alternative perspective on the concept by pointing out that nations may project and utilise their strategic culture given their respective interests (Anand, 2020, p. 198).

Nonetheless, more recent theoretical trends in IR, particularly to the broader constructivist theory’s reach, expedited the need for a further evaluation of domestic factors that lead to particular state security strategic behaviour. Over and beyond, the aforementioned theory successfully integrates cultural identity, biases, and perceptions in IR, noting that respective social processes and values produce mixed results due to inter-subjective perceptions. It is nevertheless clarified that putting the theory of strategic culture in the constructivist theory’s prism does not necessarily imply an epistemological correlation.

Even though Constructivism represents a general social theory, rather than a theory of international or security politics (Barnett, 2014, p. 157; Booth, 2005a, p. 272), it allows the exploration of the non-material features of the world, such as human association and ideas (Wendt, 1999, p. 1). It also acknowledges similar inter-subjective approaches of the nature and process of integrating national interests in the global system, which other theories fail to realise. Thus, it “matches a conceptual focus on social structures to an empirical focus on communicative practices” (Lock, 2010, pp. 701–702), just as strategic culture does. Further intensifying the above position, Anand aptly cautions that:

Apart from the fundamental agreement on some form of cultural influence on strategic decision-making, there is also a consensus in these definitions among scholars of strategic culture about the concept being rooted in an opposition or critique to rationalist, materialist, universal and ethno-centric theorising of strategic studies (Anand, 2020, p. 200).

Indeed, realists recognise the world based on pre-determined structures and constant rivalries; namely, they set rationality, anarchy, and power politics as critical parameters for behavioural interpretation (Buzan and Hansen, 2009, p. 191; Williams, 2007, p. 8).

Explicating strategic choices centred on strict values or rational models is nevertheless rather facile. Poore (2003, p. 284) argues that “without investigating the cultural context in which decisions are made, we are left with narrow and meaningless insights into strategic behaviour.” Gray (2014, p. 203) stresses that “rationality and reason cannot prudently be assumed to rule (...) in the future; after all, they have not done so in the past.” Still, it should be mentioned that traditional approaches do not necessarily imply an entire exclusion of the psychosocial dimension of security policy-making choices (Williams, 2007, p. 9). In his realist analysis on domestic policies of power balancing, Schweller (2006, p. 41) admits that “people are predisposed to see what they expect to be present, and they interpret information in a way that is consistent with their pre-existing beliefs.” Although realists suppose that states will act rationally, Johnson, Kartchner and Larsen clarify that:

*Strategic culture seeks to amplify and contextualise this largely correct assumption (...) but in order to project behaviour on that premise, one must understand rationality within a cultural context* (Johnson, Kartchner and Larsen, 2009, p. 6).

## **Domestic Processes, Decision-Making, and Strategic Behavioural Manifestations: Analysing the Motives**

This research emphasises intrastate sociological, cultural, and political determinants that lead to particular strategic behaviour under the supposition that they affect security notions to an extensive degree, as drawn up with the previous section’s formalities. Likewise, states are large-scale human societies which share common values. Thus, judgements on what stands for a common interest or not are made by a particular group of people, whose beliefs are directly influenced by their cultural, sociological, and political background, together with their intimate experiences. Consequently, national security strategic expressions should be evaluated alongside decision-makers’ perspectives and cognitions stemming from these motives. Therefore, this section emphasises the role of “human agency” and “agentic culture” to explore this hypothesis.

For social cognitive theorists, “human agency can be exercised (...) by collective agency operating through shared beliefs of efficacy, pooled understandings, group aspirations and incentive systems, and collective action” (Bandura, 1999). Moreover, following the “Poliheuristic Theory,” which focuses both on “cognitive and environmental constraints” in decision-making processes (Mintz, Redd and Tal-Shir, 2017), this research further embraces the need to analyse the interaction between the motives under consideration and the agents so as to assess the former’s contribution to security-making. Tsakonas (2010, p. 12) states that agentic culture “functions as a filter through which certain situational variables that influence a state’s strategic behaviour, such as (...) domestic politics, are analysed and assessed” and decision-makers represent “the main vehicles” of it. This section eventually discusses three main factors which are believed to guide decision-makers to distinct choices and tries to analyse how these are reflected in strategic behavioural attitudes in the long term.

### **Cultural Discourse: Narratives and Experiences**

Admittedly, one might wonder why culture is not holistically regarded as a parameter since this text examines the influence of domestic cultural characteristics. Although Lantis (2014, p. 175) notices that “cultural beliefs and values act as a distinct national lens to shape perceptions of events and even channel possible societal responses,” culture per se cannot, presumably, be entirely considered as such because of its complexity. How-

ever, one can independently explore certain aspects reflected in security-making. Consequently, this subsection aims to correlate narratives and conflict experiences to strategic behavioural expressions.

The essence of the argumentation here revolves around the assumption that notions on history and national myths within a society more or less create a collective identity; hence, they may also cultivate norms, patterns of belief, or security and threat perceptions. It is noted that modern political psychologists revitalised their particular interest in analysing “perceptions” in IR due to the “failure of theories that relied on purely material factors to explain the outbreak of war and the conclusion of peace” (Herrmann, 2013, p. 336). For Bucher and Jasper:

*Identity scholarship has successfully argued that preferences, interests and norm structures are inseparably tied to actors’ identities, which need to be taken seriously in order to account for state action and international security dynamics* (Bucher and Jasper, 2016, p. 392).

Johnson (2006, p. 11) argues that “identity, values, norms and perceptible lens” do have a consistent effect, as cultural variables, on security politics. Moreover, Subotić claims that:

*[as] individuals need a sense of autobiography, so too groups need a narrative (...) Having a secure autobiography, a firm grasp on our past and our history provides a sense of stability and allows us to move forward* (Subotić, 2016, p. 612).

Ergo, narratives and historical experiences indirectly affect decision-makers by creating a form of understanding for other actors regarding national security threat images. Inevitably, the latter is reflected, through the behaviour of agents, in the formation and implementation of national security policies. Such an example can be found in modern literature and concerns Poland’s strategic choice to join the US-led military coalition against ISIS. In this regard, Doeser (2018, pp. 458–462) estimates that Polish decision-makers were led to this option owing to a predisposition driven by their critical historical experiences that were associated with the intervention of foreign countries in their internal affairs and a strategic assessment to ensure possible security guarantees from their allies for their territorial sovereignty. In general, and as Johnson states:

*behaviour is based on the perception of reality, not reality itself. Perceptions of “fact,” of our own histories, of our image abroad, of what motivates others, of the capabilities of our leadership and our national resources, and other security-related ideas, all play a strong role in forming what each regime believes to be rational foreign policy* (Johnson, 2006, p. 13).

Even though several scholars have demonstrated the importance of identity, national narratives, and experiences in the national security strategy’s framework, this input suffers from intense subjectivity. This presumption stems from the ease of treatment or manipulation of the above determinants, especially the narratives, by domestic political agents, since they represent a “social structure” (Subotić, 2016, p. 616), in order to justify and legitimise their political choices (in this case, “policy objectives”) – following the toned to produce valuable results. Furthermore, in their review on the interaction between identity and action, Bucher and Jasper (2016) also proclaim that domestic struggles for power can alter identity perceptions, and thereby narratives. They also note that:

*focusing on domestic identity discourses that “generate” foreign policy resembles essentialist approaches in which identity (often through the internalisation of norms) causes actions. The primary focus on domestic discourses consequently runs the risk of reproducing identity as something that is prior to action* (Bucher and Jasper, 2016, p. 395).

## Political Settings and Decision-Making Constraints

This subsection assesses how internal political schemes influence decision-makers' strategic choices and behaviour. Nevertheless, the existing literature demonstrates various theoretical approaches, such as rational, institutional, or constructivist, regarding the role of domestic politics in multi-level decision-making processes or even the essence behind this interaction. For clarity, this paper sympathises with the constructivist theory's formalities. In particular, and drawing on Kaarbo's (2015, p. 199) analysis of foreign policy, IR, and domestic politics, Constructivism sets an association between individual or collective agency and ideas. In other words, high-level policy-making and dominant domestic political attributes are to be parallelly observed.

Therefore, the central supposition here is examined from two perspectives. On the one side, those involved in national security realisation processes are assumed to be affected by their intimate political system's attributes, such as political culture, ideological variables, and political stands on national security issues. On the other side, decision-makers are supposed to be constrained by domestic institutional imprints related to high-policy issues.

Per Krebs (2018, pp. 263–265), security-making is based on “setting, devising and sustaining” policy objectives. Following Bar-Maoz (2018, p. 37), “national security strategy is always the product of a political process in which national interests are subjectively defined by political practitioners who, having their own political agenda, understand national security affairs according to the medium of their own perceptions.” Therefore, the realisation of national security is inherently inter-subjective since it is based on domestic power competition formulated by human agency (Krebs, 2018, p. 264) and ideas, which inevitably develop types of norms in turn. In these terms, security-makers as agents are constantly being affected by domestic political actors, political parties, or even interest groups within the state system by indirectly serving pre-cultivated patterns of values and norms.

Furthermore, under the supposition that political agents may externalise domestic political norms, Schultz (2013, p. 488) provides a clear picture of political culture's role in interstate behavioural manifestations in relation to war or peace issues. In his sub-consideration on “Democracy, norms, and identity,” Schultz (2013, pp. 488–489) assumes that two or more liberal states, for instance, will not resort to a conflict to resolve their differences due to identical political discourses, such as their similar democracies. However, a liberal state can clash with a non-liberal one due to the absence of ordinary norms. Proportionately, the processes mentioned above might modify decision-makers' behaviour during the implementation of specific external security objectives. Notwithstanding, Werner and Lemke's (1997) empirical research had proclaimed that “regardless of regime type, institutional similarities matter to the aligning state's decision.”

As mentioned earlier in this text, the interrelation between policy-making and human agency constructs respective political, institutional imprints. The latter can either be observed as forms of legislation or institutional key-texts. In his book's first chapter, Auerwald (2000) discusses the relationship between domestic institutions and conflict policymaking and concludes that:

*Relationships of domestic accountability and executive agenda control had a large impact on the executive's calculus. That is, domestic institutional variables had a large effect on an executive's flexibility (Auerwald, 2000, p. 44).*

Moreover, critical texts edited by the executive branch or officeholders provide strategic objectives for present or future policymaking. Therefore, it is safe to assume that decision-

makers might also be framed by both executive agency's stands and particular guidelines, which provide information about the general context in which national security agendas should be implemented. Finally, yet significantly, institutions can also influence the "resources decision-makers have available and what policy instruments they find attractive" (Krebs, 2018, p. 262).

## Security Socialisation Processes: Public Opinion, Agents, and Cognitions of Decision-Makers

Political socialisation processes might be regarded as an influential parameter on national defence and security planning (Voskopoulos, 2018, pp. 207–212). However, the term "political socialisation" itself, namely "the process by which citizens crystallise political identities, values and behaviour that remain relatively persistent throughout later life" (Neundorf and Smets, 2017), might redirect this research to paths beyond societal understandings on national security. For reasons of distinction, the term "intrastate security socialisation" is, thereby, preferred. At first glance, however, a further correlation between the last-mentioned concept and strategic decision-making admittedly seems incompatible; thus, a question arises: Why should this practice be considered a potential determinant.

The rationale here is based on the belief that national security should be observed as a stable social pursuit. Given that, it is logical to suppose that decision-makers will be influenced by the state's bilateral relationship with its citizens. Put differently, and on the one hand, decision-makers are constantly interacting with the elected group that exercises power, namely the government, and they may also be politicians themselves. On the other hand, being under the pressure of citizens' electoral choices, executives are disposed towards existing public perspectives in relation to high-policy issues, which may stem from intrastate security socialisation processes. Therefore, it is not a safe assessment to consider that decision-makers act without being influenced by either public opinion or the particular agents concerned with socialising and cultivating cognitions.

In general terms, more or less all citizens share some form of opinion, belief, attitude, or value on policy-relevant issues. Glynn *et al.* (2018, pp. 22–23) claim that these variables can be multi-dimensional in terms of the "direction," "intensity" and "stability" of people's positions. It is, nevertheless, to be noted that the public opinion theories scholarship is quite extensive as a result of its interdisciplinary scientific character. Hence, for reasons of research clarity, this text sympathises with the theoretical approach that places public opinion in the context of common perceptions.<sup>1</sup> Simply put, this theory assumes that socialisation and social comparison sub-processes can guide individuals' to "what others think about public issues; form perceptions of what others think; and to an extent, modify their own opinions or behaviour, or both, on the basis of these perceptions"; subsequently, these perspectives construct social norms that influence individuals' social cognitive processes (Glynn *et al.*, 2018, pp. 182–183).

Given the above, public opinion, provided that it is related to high politics, might affect decision-makers' cognitions regarding policy formation and implementation. That being the case, Eichenberg (2007, pp. 384–385) estimated that public opinion might represent an important variable concerning foreign policy implementation, global peace and security issues, or the usage of military force abroad. What is more, by examining the whys of Finland's strategic option not to join Operation Unified Protector in Libya (2011), Doerer (2017, p. 755) concludes that governmental decision-makers may seriously consider the main perceptions of public opinion and opposition parties and when next elections are to be held, in order to facilitate the alteration of an existing strategic culture. Consequently, strategic culture can, within this context, be theorised as "the ag-

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1. Glynn *et al.* (2018, pp. 87–233) present five distinct typologies regarding public opinion theories – "public opinion and democratic theory"; "psychological perspectives on public opinion"; "stereotyping, social norms, and public opinion"; "perception and opinion formation; economic approaches."



gregation of the attitudes and patterns of behaviour of the most influential voices; these may be, depending on the entity, the political elite, the military establishment and/or public opinion” (Booth, 2005b, p. 25).

Academia, technocrats, media, and political parties should herein be considered agents of intrastate security socialisation as long as they educate, channel general awareness and perspectives on national security to a stable degree (see also Gelpi, 2017). For instance, scholars, think tanks, and research institutes may be regarded as such, forasmuch as many of the existing security strategic guidelines are being formulated through policy recommendation practices. Additionally, the media may also act as socialisers, in that they considerably interfere with public opinion. In particular, and following Moy and Bosch (2013, pp. 294–299), there are three main concepts of how the media typically influences public opinion; namely, by influencing people’s political attitudes (“agenda-setting”), its evaluation of things (“priming”), and actual understanding of an issue (“framing”). Therefore, if all these agents consistently cultivate patterns of belief and values, they can also be considered factors that create certain national security notions, which cognitively predispose decision-makers.

Subsequently, it is equally safe to estimate that threat perceptions are being subjected to change as critical circumstances are constantly being absorbed by the political system and constantly re-examined by intrastate security socialisation agents. In his analysis of the Greek strategic relocation towards Turkey in the later 1990s, Tsakonas (2010, p. 53) argues that the Imia islets crisis led Greek policymakers to “distinguish faulty strategic concepts from effective ones” due to domestic agents’ reconsideration of “global and regional power configuration.” Likewise, Libel (2016, p. 142) generally specifies that notions on polity safety might change, as “a crisis may cause the hegemonic status of the dominant epistemic community to collapse, thereby initiating competition between subcultures.” This condition could cause “expert groups [to] form epistemic communities, bundling their ideas together, or else dormant groups revitalise their activity” (Libel, 2016, p. 142).

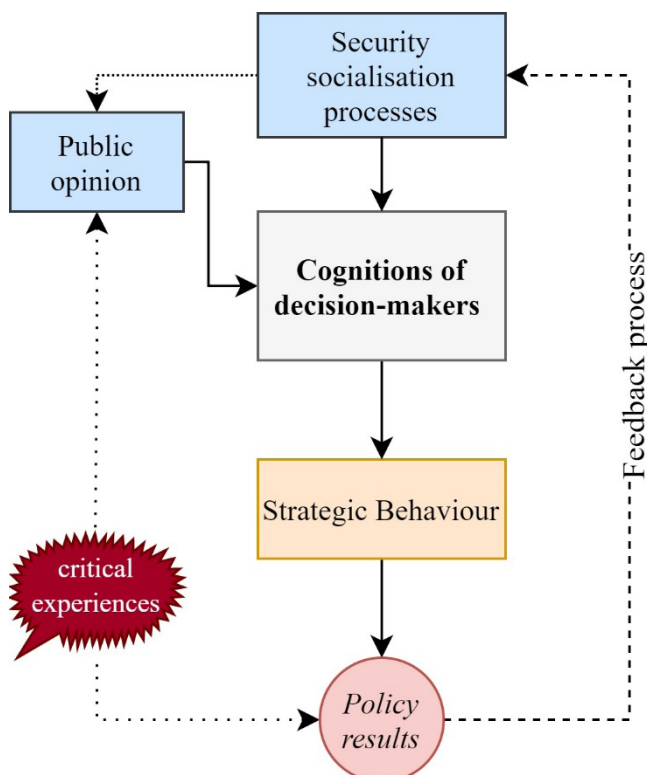


Figure 1. Security socialisation model.

## Endogenous Processes, Strategic Culture, Decision-Making, and Policy Implementation: Correlational Implications and Evaluation

With a focus to provide further correlation implications on the topic being examined, it is regarded as essential to return to the main conceptual aim of this paper; that is, to shed light on how socio-political and cultural processes within a state environment – or generally defined here as domestic motives – interact with the realisation process of national security policies. The methodology was based on the research assumption that security strategies can differ, in terms of typicality and outcomes, from one state to another due to non-similar domestic settings and circumstances.

Thereby, and in the first section, it was argued that state agents subjectively perceive how national security politics are to be formatted and implemented, owing to their distinctive security strategic cultural background which is in turn affected by a number of factors, such as existing norms, wider cultural characteristics, experiences, or preferences. In other words, state behavioural manifestations on polity safety are dependent on security-makers' strategic cultural background, which is affected by the aforementioned motives. On that account, the concept of strategic culture was examined, following Gray (1999, p. 50), "both as a shaping context for the behaviour itself and as a constituent of that behavior."

By trying to further enhance the previous general contextual implications, the second section moved this discussion forward. Based on the presupposition that the strategic culture concept may reflect a wide spectrum of the constructivist theory's notions, it was assessed that every casual relation between endogenous motives and security politics should be examined with reference to human agency, communication, and association patterns. However, since the motives guiding these schemes can be numerous and multidimensional, it was decided in advance that this essay would focus on the impact of political settings, socialisation processes, and cultural discourses on safety culture and security agency.

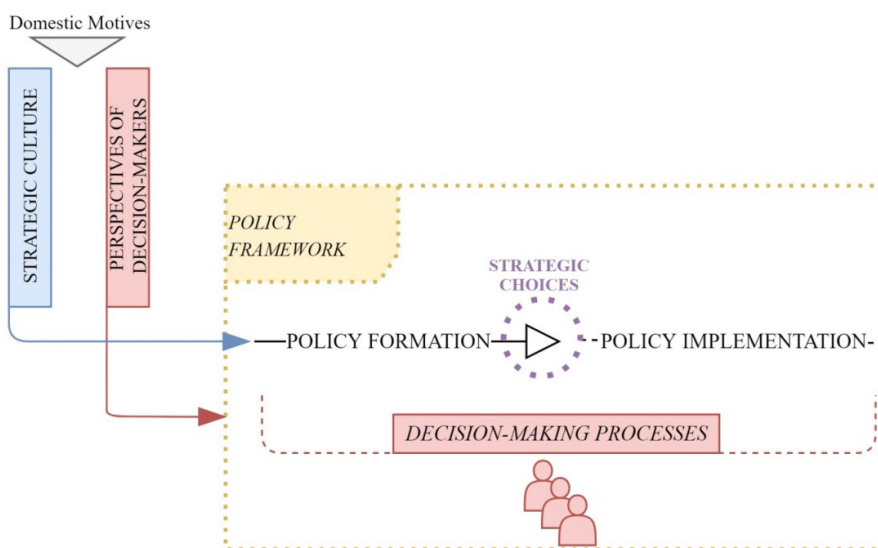
Although both sections have logically explored the reasoning behind strategic behaviour and choices regarding internal and external security politics, it eventually appeared that this text indirectly presented two analysis levels; namely, the "strategic culture" and "agentic culture" contexts. What is nevertheless important for this conceptual research, in order to re-affirm the primary hypotheses, is to implicate (i) the relation of the aforementioned political, social and cultural motives on both contexts of analysis and (ii) provide a functional correlation between the levels.

In respect of the first issue, it can initially be assumed that the motives herein examined may act as sources of strategic culture for state agents. Debates about the sources admittedly lie at the heart of interest for the strategic culture scholarship, for as much as they can redirect the very essence of the concept. Per Uz Zaman (2009, p. 82), there is a consensus on considering "geography, climate and resources; history and experience; political structure; the nature of organizations involved in defense; myths and symbols; key texts that inform actors of appropriate strategic action; and transnational norms, generational change and the role of technology" as sources. Moreover, and in accordance with the second section's further analytical points, it can be generalised that cultural discourses, socialisation schemes, and political settings can have a knock-on effect on security-makers' cognitive processes, by creating biases and (mis)perceptions during decision-making and they can also be regarded as sources of agents' perspectives. In particular, the second section established that narratives and historical experiences guide perceptions of identity and threat; political norms, key-texts, and institutional settings

construct behavioural patterns and constraints during security-making; last, domestic public opinion and socialisation agents influence decision-makers' ideas about national security issues.

With regard to the second issue, and drawing on the entire text's strands, it can be taken into account that on the one side, strategic culture generally affects both the basic principles (the standpoints) of a state's national security agenda, the targeting, and the description of the ways and means of realisation. Put differently, and as Mitreġa and Kozub (2019, p. 46) generalise, "it might be assumed that strategic culture is the source and basis of the state strategy and policy in the area of safety and security." On the other side, decision-makers' perspectives provide further qualitative traits to the security-making process, such as policy targeting (re-)adjustments, the implementation's modus operandi and the application of the policy objectives per se, situations that might ultimately affect respective policies' success and effectiveness. Hence, if the two levels of analysis are parallelly placed and complementarily understood in terms of functionality and causality, then it is safe to understand a further analogical correlation to the extent that the "strategic culture" and "agentic culture" contexts are finally being observed on the broader policy framework. Therefore, both the impact of intrastate political, sociological and cultural motives on the realisation of national security and the "strategic culture – decision-making processes" dialectical association can be confirmed. The correlational implications can be visualised accordingly:

Figure 2. Visualisation of the correlation.



## Conclusion

Preliminary conceptual results in this paper indicate that domestic influences, if placed into the context of strategic culture and decision-making processes, can affect strategic behaviour, choices and, ultimately, the realisation of national security politics. However, as Mitreġa and Kozub (2019, p. 47) note, "the direct impact of strategic culture on specific decisions and actions cannot be measured." For Booth:

*[Strategic culture] helps shape but does not determine how an actor interacts with others in the security field. Other explanations (e.g. institutional or capability limitations) play a greater or lesser role in particular circumstances. Strategic culture helps shape behaviour on such issues as the use of force in international politics, sensitivity to external dangers, civil-military relations and strategic doctrine* (Booth 2005b, pp. 25–26).

It would be a mistake for this analysis to reject that factors other than the motives herein examined, such as power politics and military capabilities, do not guide decision-makers to certain strategic choices. This exact limitation stems from the supposition that military strategies and operational requirements regarding involvement in a conflict may interact with the broader national security strategic framework, through a “bottom-up” interference process; thus, contributing to the shift or the reshaping of a state’s strategic culture. For instance, and looking at the case of the modern Russian military-strategic culture, Adamsky (2017, pp. 37–40) states that Moscow had abolished a long-term view on nuclear deterrence in favour of “Next Generation Warfare” schemes, owing to the incompatibility of previous policies with military capabilities and the restructuring of the military doctrine after the war in Georgia (2008) (see also Baev, 2020). Furthermore, the contemporary aspects of globalisation have also influenced perceptions of national security, collective security or even understandings regarding the formation of security communities. Similarly, multi-layered international governance has left its imprint on intrastate politics. Closer examination of endogenous constraints and determinants is nonetheless believed to add value to the security strategic behavioural scholarship.

It can also be seen here that as endogenous determinants might be differently classified from one state’s policy framework to another, strategic choices may drift to distinct paths; hence, strategic manifestations in security politics are to differ in terms of targeting and pursuits among states. That condition has, admittedly, been a point of criticism in the past, namely, as to whether findings on case studies that refer to strategic cultural manifestations can be generalised in the long term (see Uz Zaman, 2009, p. 83). Therefore, additional correlational and methodological implications in relation to the topic under consideration would further establish this research’s initial findings and embrace the interdisciplinary scholarship requirements of Security Studies.

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#### **Disclosure Statement**

This paper is the result of independent research. The views expressed are solely those of the author and do not represent the official positions of the author’s present or past employers.

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