



## Theoretical Model of National Security Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran based on Societal Security

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**Abstract:** The national security policymaking of the Islamic Republic of Iran, within the framework of conventional approaches -despite its strengths - suffers from some shortcomings and potential harms. Therefore, it requires scientific research in order to draw a theoretical model and apply an efficient approach, in a way that helps in identifying potential harms and providing strategies appropriate to the conditions and requirements of the Islamic Republic of Iran. This article was written with the aim of drawing a theoretical model of the national security policymaking of the Islamic Republic of Iran based on societal security. The research process is based on a system of questions and the "qualitative meta-synthesis" method has been used. After combining various policymaking approaches and adding the theory of societal security to it, a clear achievement has been presented for improving the national security policymaking process based on the indicators of the theory of societal security, which can be used to identify the weaknesses and potential harms in the national security policymaking process and provide appropriate strategies.

**Keywords:** Islamic Republic of Iran policy public policy national security policy societal security.

### **Introduction**

**Statement of the problem:** National security policy is a type of policy based on national needs and the public demands of society, and it must be conducted within the framework of appropriate approaches to achieve the desired outcome. There are various theoretical approaches in public policy, some of which, due to their nature, are not suitable for national security policy (such as public choice). Some others also have flaws and weaknesses and lack the characteristics of being comprehensive and barrier-free. Therefore, by using a combined approach, a relatively effective model should be achieved that is both flawless and does not lead to overlapping processes. Approaches determine the type and manner of policy; however, they do not address issues from a theoretical and substantive perspective. In fact, public policy theories describe the domain and scope of activity, the stages, steps, and sequence of actions. To shape policy according to a specific theory, the components and indicators of the scientific theory must be incorporated at various stages of policy. Various schools of thought, from realism to idealism, have proposed theories regarding national security and its components. Societal security is also one of the schools of thought that was first introduced by Barry Buzan and his colleagues. This theory has undergone revisions and modifications among Western scholars. In Iran, based on internal needs and characteristics, significant and adaptable changes have been made, leading to the redefinition of its components and the creation of a new theoretical domain. In this conception of Societal security, we encounter an identity-centered narrative of security that transforms the subject of security and confirms the social roots of security. In Societal security, the preservation and enhancement of social identity and community social capital are emphasized. In this approach, the focus of security has shifted from the state to the general public, and utilizing the capabilities and capacities of the citizens in the community to produce, maintain, and reproduce security creates conditions where the social context and foundation are considered the backbone of national and sustainable security in security strategies. To implement the national security policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran based on societal security, it is necessary to adhere to two

principles: the precise implementation of policy-making and the utilization of theory, which results in a relatively comprehensive approach committed to the components of societal security. This approach must first be developed into a theoretical model before implementation, so that specific criteria can be outlined for diagnosis and strategy formulation.

**Importance:** The present research, due to its nature in providing a model and approach, holds theoretical significance; as it aids in the understanding and analysis of the national security policy model based on the theory of societal security in Iran by offering an optimal and efficient theoretical approach. Moreover, since this research can be applied and implemented in the policy-making cycle, it can also have practical significance and desirable practical effects.

**Necessity:** By using the results of this research and the model derived from it, the damages of the national security policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran based on societal security can be identified, and efforts can be made to provide strategies corresponding to the potential damages so that it can also be effective at the executive level. Therefore, this research has practical necessity.

**Objectives:** Strengthening the decision-making process and effective action in the field of national security using the capacities of societal security theory constitutes the main objective of this research. In this context, two secondary objectives have been defined, which are: assisting in the reform of the national security policy process in the country; and strengthening the community approach in identifying, analyzing, and managing national security issues.

**Questions and Hypothesis:** The present research is not hypothesis-testing and is based on the following system of questions. The main question is: What are the foundations of the Islamic Republic of Iran's national security policy based on societal security?

In this regard, the following sub-questions have been posed:

What are the essential components derived from the theory of securitized security to outline the national security policy model of the Islamic Republic of Iran?

What are the methods of national security policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran based on societal security?

**Research background:** National security policy in Iran and societal security have become extensive topics that numerous studies have addressed various aspects and sections of them, including theory, trends, processes, and applications. These studies have been divided into two sections:

A. Works dedicated to the topic of national security policy in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Gharayagh Zandi (2011) has explained the current state of national security policy in Iran and pointed out several main issues, including: the lack of a clear definition of security policies, the complexity of the national security structure, the instability of the national security decision-making structure, the focus on details and lack of foresight in security matters, and the ineffective participation of the public in security decisions. Yazdani Zazrani (2013) have researched the same topic with an emphasis on the field of societal security and concluded that the level of societal security is influenced by societal security policy, which in turn is affected by variables such as the political regime, the level of national development, and the type of national development. Amiri Moghadam (2012) took a step further and attempted to present a suitable model for national security policy in Iran. This same goal, focusing on internal security policy in the Islamic Republic of Iran, has been pursued by Razavi Nejad (2018) and has resulted in the presentation of a model based on the theories of Etzioni and Hirschman.

B. Works that focus on the analysis and understanding of the theory of societal security are dedicated to this subject.

Eftekhari (2001), considering the position of sociology in national security studies, has stated that without a sociological perspective on security, it is impossible to achieve a meaningful and indigenous theory of security in society, and the social context transforms the image and concept of security in each society through intervention in the nine domains. Nasri (2012) has explained and interpreted the theoretical foundations of "societal security" in Western societies and has critiqued and evaluated the theory of "socially constructed security" in accordance with the needs of Iranian society. In this context, Eftekhari (2015), as the theorist of "societal security in

Islamic discourse," has addressed various interpretations of the concepts of security and society and the relationship between society and security. He has compared the level and scope of interpretations of the term "society" to highlight the differences. Among all the existing interpretations, he has chosen society as the discourse and, by critiquing the Copenhagen interpretation, has not considered identity on par with other subjects but rather equated it with the principle of security, viewing security as based on the normative and value-based principles of society. In other words, the normative and value-based components that create identity constitute the essence of security.

An evaluation of the works in the field of policy shows that they have focused on critiquing and diagnosing the policy process and have achieved good results in this area. However, in explaining national security policy, they have not utilized the theory of societal security. As the texts of the second group have elaborated on the explanation and analysis of the societal security theory in detail, they have not used it in the context of Iran's national security policy. Therefore, there is a gap for a theoretical model that can effectively combine theory and process.

The innovation of this article lies in the combination of models and practical approaches to public policy in the field of national security, so that by addressing weaknesses, the theory can be involved and effective within the process and procedure of national security policy in the Islamic Republic of Iran through a combined model. This model will lead to a redefinition of the examination of national security policy based on theory.

### **1. Research method**

This research is descriptive-analytical in terms of the researchers' approach and theoretical-applied in terms of type. Since it examines the topic of societal security, focusing on the approach and method of public policy based on theories, it is considered theoretical. However, because it also pays attention to presenting a new model in policy, it is regarded as practical. For data collection, the documentary method was used, and for their analysis, the "meta-synthesis" method was employed.



**1.1. Method Introduction:** The analysis is primarily conducted qualitatively using the conventional coding method in qualitative research, focusing on the concepts and results utilized in past studies. In this method, the texts of past research can be used as data for future research. The goal of meta-synthesis is to create a coherent and integrated interpretation of qualitative findings. (Sandelowski and Barroso 2007)

The researchers consider theory construction to be one of the goals of meta-synthesis, and this method is an appropriate solution for utilizing existing qualitative findings to develop a new theory. Accordingly, while addressing the lexical structure of discussions and components of societal security through referring to various interpretations from the perspectives of other researchers, new domains in meaning and interpretation are also coded.

**1.2. Methodology:** For the operational implementation of the composite method, the following steps have been taken:

Step one. Determining the Scope of Research: Since in this method, the scope of the research is very important, the time frame of the published works from 1982 to 2023 (1360 to 1400 in the Iranian calendar) was initially specified. For this purpose, various databases, publications, and search engines were reviewed and examined.

Step two. Determination of keywords: In order to access relevant resources with a focus on the conceptual framework, the search keywords were defined and selected. These terms include "securitized security," "Societal Security," and "Copenhagen School," which were examined in foreign and domestic sources with the aim of identifying credible, reliable, and relevant documents for the search, and initial sources were identified and gathered.

Step three. Search and selection of works: In this stage, the selected keywords were entered into the search engine, and sources containing "Societal Security" in their titles and texts, which introduced, critiqued, expanded, or redefined the concept, were identified. At this stage, there were sometimes shortages of resources due to the filtering process, which required compensating for this shortfall. Additionally, due to the lack of clear and precise boundaries in theoretical discussions within this field, some overlapping and

intersecting concepts were used to select appropriate resources. These concepts included "societal security", "societal security", and "the Copenhagen School."

As a result, 91 works (30 sources in Persian and 61 sources in English), including books and articles, were found that had "socially constructed security" in their research titles and had introduced, critiqued, or redefined it. However, due to the lack of clear and precise boundaries in the theoretical discussions in this field, which caused some overlap and interference with other concepts, other parallel concepts such as national security, community-centered security, expansive security, and proactive security became necessary for selecting appropriate sources.

Step four. Selection of sources: To qualitatively evaluate the collected sources, a brief questionnaire (CASP) was used as the "Critical Appraisal Skills Program." Through this method, the relevance, accuracy, credibility, and significance of the sources can be determined. These questions included criteria such as the relevance of titles and abstracts of the sources, methodology, the scientific credibility of the authors, and the originality, firsthand nature, clarity, and transparency of the findings. In the final selection stage of the sources, 66 titles that did not meet the questionnaire (checklist) criteria and were not applicable were identified. A total of 25 texts, including 11 sources in English and 14 sources in Persian, were selected and analyzed. Table number (1) shows the distribution of selected texts based on language type in the field of societal security. Persian sources are coded with the letter F, and English sources with the letter E.

English sources	Persian sources
E\E-01-A Working Definition of Societal Security	F\F-01- Social Security Research Paper; Chapter One - The Social Nature of Security
E\E-02-Regions and Powers (The Structure of International Security)	F\F-02- Copenhagen School: Theoretical foundations and practical standards
E\E-03-People,States and Fear	F\F-03- Societal security as the vital core of sustainable national security

E\E-04-Broadening the Concept of Security Identity and Societal	F\F-04- A theoretical reflection on social security
E\E-05-Security_A New Framework for Analysis	F\F-05- Post-Copenhagen Security Studies DeSecuritization - Securitization
E\E-06-A Critical Application of Theory Securitization	F\F-06- Securing and Desecuring
E\E-07-Identity, Societal Security and Regional Integration In EU	F\F-07- Social Security Research Paper; Chapter Two - Community Security
E\E-08-RETHINKING SECURITY	F\F-08- A theoretical reflection on the findings and difficulties of Buzan's burden in examining security
E\E-09-ReferenceWorkEntry_SocietalSecurity	F\F-09- Social Security Research Paper; Chapter Four: Social Order and Security
E\E-10-Societal security	F\F-10- Social Security Research Paper; Chapter Eight: Issues and Strategies for Strengthening
E\E-11-State Security, Societal Security, and Human Security	F\F-11- Epistemology of social security
	F\F-12- The problem of national security in the Third World
	F\F-13- The meaning and pillars of the sociology of security
	F\F-14- The Copenhagen Perspective on Securitization: Foundations and Challenges

**Table 1.** Distribution of selected texts by language

Step five. Finding components: In this stage of the research, the selected and final sources were analyzed and reviewed using Maxqda software version 2020 to identify the components of societal security. All the components and concepts through which the theory of societal security was defined were coded by reviewing the sources. In fact, these components are concepts that elaborate and introduce the aforementioned theory. Efforts were made to code each component with its initial definition. If the authors provided a secondary definition and expanded the concept of each component, creating a



new scope for it, it was added to the total data frequency. Thus, repetitive definitions, explanations, and examples were not counted in the frequency, and the content findings were reviewed and categorized.

The dispersion of components in various sources was collected in the form of a content analysis software report, providing coherence to the understanding of the findings. In other words, codes connected to the text were extracted from the textual findings. These codes form the smallest linguistic units and meaningful concepts of the theory, and they can serve as the basis for prioritizing conceptualization for each author. Simply put, those fundamental components that were collectively considered by the authors were gathered. The complete software report is in the form of a Word file, including 80 pages of coded phrases that contain a breakdown of the codes in the attached sources.

Step Six. Analysis and classification of findings: In this stage, the categorization of these concepts was clustered, resulting in a total of 411 coded phrases from the selected sources. It is worth mentioning that other components such as damage and threat, reference and security sources in other political, military, security, and environmental fields, as well as concepts like the intensity and purpose of the threat, which were present in the texts of theorists, were also coded, bringing the total to 526 propositions. However, the criterion was to focus on the specific components of the social domain. The dispersion of these concepts was categorized under the components, and the results were obtained as shown in the next table:

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Component	QTY	Percent
Identity and Values	88	21/41
Securitization & DeSecuritization	70	17/03
Insecurity, Threats and Vulnerabilities	68	16/55
State (Policy-making institution)	46	11/19
Social-centered (Reference Security and Actor Security)	44	10/71
Resilience and Survive	28	6/81
Expanded security	25	6/08
Security referent	22	5/35
Social-Government interactive	10	2/43
Security issue	4	0/97
Security complexes	2	0/49
Regional security complex	1	0/24
Power	1	0/24
National defense	1	0/24
Material dimension	1	0/24
Total	411	100/00

**Table 2.** Frequency of components based on count and percentage

These components, with their strong conceptual depth, have formed the main framework of the societal security theory. For further clarification, 9 components that form the main pillars of the theory and have been most frequently repeated and emphasized were selected. Some of them have subcodes. In this context, Figure 4, containing the frequency of the most central categorical section and the semantic core of the societal security theory, was extracted, which is considered the theoretical focal point.

## 2. Conceptual and Theoretical Foundations

The conceptual and theoretical foundations of the present research are centered around public policy, national security, and societal security, which are as follows:

### 2.1. Public policy

A. Definition: Policy-making is simply defined as "a specific way of shaping action" and is more of a conscious and purposeful effort than a systematic or random one (Forouzandeh and Vojdani 2010, 181). Eumeni and Jean-Claude Thoening also define the term public policy in their book, which is one of the notable Anglo-Saxon reference works, as follows: Public policy is a phenomenon that appears in the form of a government program, in a part of society or a geographical space. (Muller 1999, 28-30). The diversity of definitions provided regarding the meaning and concept of public policy share a common feature: the agent of public policy is the government. Therefore, when we talk about public policies, we are actually focusing on the actions of the government. What is clear is that public policy has a close relationship with the way the government interacts with society (composed of the private sector and civil society, which, alongside the government, form the components of governance). (Yazdani Zazrani 2013, 126-127)

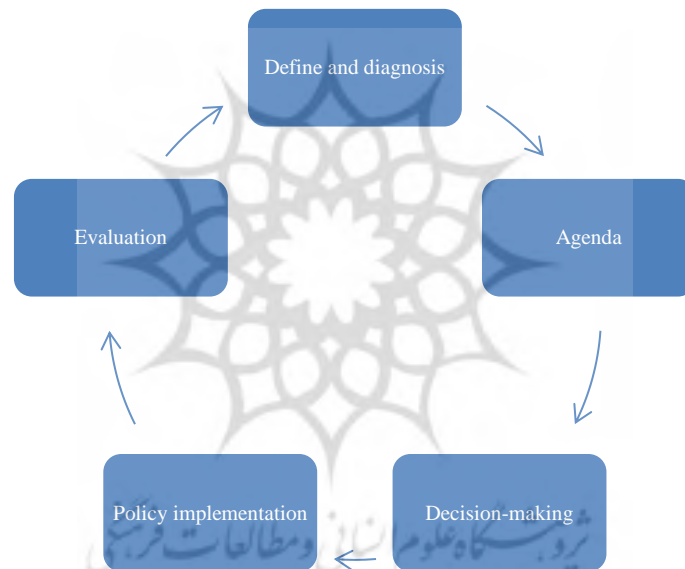
In the traditional state, politics is a tool for preserving the interests of the rulers, but in the modern state, politics is a tool for protecting political order. For this reason, the use of indirect tools of governance, namely the art of policy and regulation, is common in developed states. The departure of governance from direct intervention in public affairs to public policy-making. Therefore, one of the most important aspects of modern governance is achieving indirect governance tools such as public policy (Rezaei and Rezvanifar 2019, 18).

B. Theories: Various theoretical approaches have been presented in the discussion of public policy, the most important of which are:

#### **First. The rational choice approach–process:**

This approach itself is a combination of two main theoretical pillars:

Theoretical pillar (1). The process-oriented approach aims to discover and explain the "process" of policy. What this model outputs is a set of different processes that are sequentially related to each other in execution. The process-oriented approach is cyclical, starting from problem identification and, after going through the stages of agenda-setting, decision-making, policy implementation, and evaluation, returning to the identification stage. In fact, this method describes the process and how decisions are made, without delving into the substance of policy.



**Figure 1.** The process-oriented approach

Theoretical pillar (2). The rational approach is one of the most important methods and models in public policy-making, based on the influence of the bargaining power of various actors on political decisions and their consequences. In summary, the rational choice method of policy can be outlined as follows: identifying the problem, presenting a solution or a goal worthy of achievement, evaluating the options to achieve the desired outcome, selecting from among these desirable options, implementing the prioritized option, and solving the problem or reaching the goal (Rahbar and Amiri 2014, 150). As

observed, the stages of this model are similar to the process model; however, after identifying the problem, the solution or desired goal is determined, the options to achieve the desired goal are evaluated, and a selection is made among the options. But instead of solely focusing on the stages of the process, it considers several other criteria. Such a process requires the involvement of a small number of decision-makers, a high degree of consensus on the components of the policy issue or desired goal, the ability to calculate and compare the potential consequences of each option, flawless implementation of the chosen option, and the absence of problems in achieving policy objectives (Rahbar and Amiri 2014, 151). The combination of the components of the rational and process methods creates the following model, which will be the rational-process model.

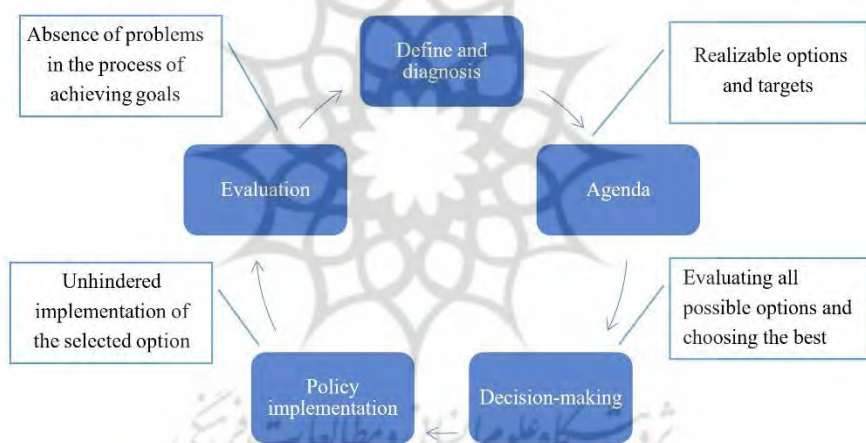


Figure 2- Rational Approach

## Second. System approach

This approach, also known as the black box model, was first introduced by David Easton. In Easton's model, one of the key processes of political systems is "inputs," which are formed alongside "demands and supports." In the systems approach, public policy of governments is considered as a political system composed of four main elements:

One. Data: which includes support, encouragement, and public demands.

Two. The political system environment: which, according to Durkheim's classification, consists of the parameters of politics, society, and economy that are constantly exchanging and interacting with each other.

Three. Output: Which is a set of government policies and decisions.

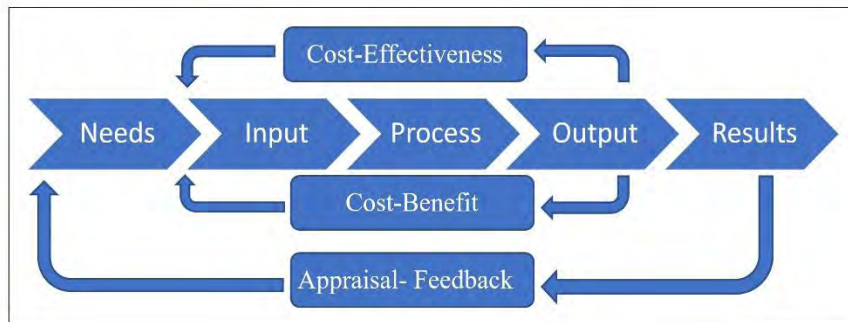
Four. Feedback: which sometimes serves as a kind of safety valve for the political system.

The main objective of the systemic analysis criterion is to examine the institutions and structures of the political system that are responsible for the authoritarian allocation of values in society.

To find the cause and reasoning behind a political decision or policy and its results and impacts, the systems method outlines a simple model that includes input (pressures, demands, needs, and requests), the decision-making system (policymaker), and output (policy), where the cost-benefit vector and feedback also play a role in this method.

Cost-effectiveness is more commonly translated as being economical and is slightly different from cost-benefit analysis. When the criterion is solely a quantitative indicator, these two concepts will be close to each other. If two options have the same cost, we need to see which one has greater and more desirable benefits and scope; this is where cost-benefit analysis alone is no longer sufficient. Sometimes among the options, there may be one that simultaneously has higher costs and benefits, in which case the criterion of "cost-effectiveness" will play a decisive role in decision-making. The model of the systemic approach will be as follows.



*Figure 3-Systematic Approach*

### Third. Institutional approach

In a simple and traditional account of this approach, James Anderson presents formal institutions in public policy as the unit of analysis, meaning the focus of the analysis is on institutions or government organizations such as the legislature, executive branch, courts, and political parties. Because, according to Anderson, public policy is more or less determined and implemented in an authoritative manner through the aforementioned institutions or the relationships between them. On the other hand, political scientists have also focused their attention on political processes within the government or political institutions and have studied the behavior of participants in these processes. The concept of communication and its regulation provides a foundational framework for recognizing the role of informal or intangible rules and norms in public policy-making. Thus, policy and policy are not only influenced by the structure of formal institutions and the separation of powers, but also a network of informal behaviors, norms, and rules is recognized and validated as an explanatory variable (Ashtarian 2008, 7-8).

### 2.2. Societal security

**2.2.1. Definition:** Following the developments that occurred in the global arena after World War II, the position of realism was criticized by idealists and liberals and accused of being pessimistic and reductionist. This trend led to the emergence of new theories. In the meantime, the Copenhagen School was the first intellectual movement to establish a more independent position for security studies. Barry

Buzan, as one of the main theorists of this school, believed that with the reduction of military threats, other threats would increase. Therefore, the concept of security expanded to other areas, and political, social, economic, and environmental domains were added to it. Political security pertains to the stability of government organization, societal security pertains to the preservation of identity, culture, and national values, economic security pertains to access to financial resources and the free market, and environmental security pertains to the preservation of the environment as a necessity for human life.

### **2.2.2. Theory**

In this conception of societal security, we encounter an identity-centered narrative of security that transforms the subject of security and confirms the social roots of security. In simpler terms, societal security deals with understanding threats and the community's response to real or perceived threats to its identity and cohesion. Both types of threats can be real or merely perceived, but as long as they provoke a reaction or counter-reaction, they are part of the determining factors in the analysis of societal security.

Similarly, the determinants of societal security can be internal (intra-social factors) or external (bilateral, multinational, subsidiary, or regional factors). The most important features of this theory are:

#### **First. Centrality of the concept of identity / social sub-identities**

In Societal security, the preservation and enhancement of social identity and the community's social capital are emphasized. In this approach, the focus of security has shifted from the state to the general public, and leveraging the capabilities and capacities of the citizens in the community to produce, maintain, and reproduce security creates conditions where the social context and foundation are considered the backing of national and sustainable security in security strategies.

#### **Second. Attention to the role of the state as an agent**

According to the Copenhagen School, although the individual is an indivisible unit in the application of the concept of security (Buzan 1991), individuals cannot be recognized as the reference of security. Buzan stated that although individual security represents a specific and important level of analysis, it is fundamentally subject to higher

political structures of the state and international system. On the other hand, individual security is positively and negatively influenced by the government, and the areas of dissonance between individual and national security indicate this perpetual contradiction (Buzan 1991, 72). Accordingly, the state is the most important agent of individual and national security in society, and the state is considered the primary and immediate authority on security.

Weaver, unlike Buzan, defends distinct social identities against the state-centric and self-expanding state. Weaver believes that security and social identity are more stable and fundamental concepts because identities exist regardless of whether there is a state or not. This idea gradually diminishes the previous and undisputed authority of the state in favor of non-state actors, and the state, instead of being the architect of societal security, becomes just one of the societal security actors – albeit with more power than the others (Nasri 2002, 40-42). Although the role of the government in formulating strategies is still emphasized.

**Third. Separation of security reference goals:**

The Copenhagen School, due to its advanced security framework and the transformation of one-dimensional security into five-dimensional security, has attempted to define security reference goals in each of the sectors (Buzan 1991, 141-159). For this purpose, the Copenhagen School has utilized the concepts of "survival" and "existential threat."

- In the military sector, the reference objective is the state.
- In the political sector, the reference goal is the concept of sovereignty and governance. Existential threats in this section can be actor-centered or structure-centered; that is, they can have external or internal factors and, on the other hand, stem from the nature of the state.
- In the economic sector, the existential threat is embedded in the nature and essence of the market economy, which has two factors: a) these threats endanger the survival of the country's population, and b) the threats have a strategic impact on the military sector.
- In the societal sector, national identity is under threat, and there are two fundamental factors contributing to its securitization: a) the issue

of the perceptions of identity holders and their sensitivity, b) the potential to exacerbate conflicts and disputes between governments.

- In the environmental section, the reference goal is the Earth's ecosystem.

**Fourth. Expanding the scope of security dimensions:**

Traditional security studies have focused on the military as the sole option in the dimensions of security. However, this dimension of security has been criticized by scholars of the Copenhagen School such as Richard Ullman and David Baldwin. Baldwin, in an article titled "Security Studies and the End of the Cold War," points out that the field of security studies, which during the Cold War was narrowly focused solely on military aspects, is no longer applicable in the post-Cold War world; because military security concerns limit and complicate the analysis of security issues at both domestic and international levels that are not dependent on military matters. (Baldwin 1995, 41).

Buzan has questioned the narrow conception of security in a much more extensive, reasoned, and robust manner, and has expanded the single-dimensional security to military, economic, political, social, and environmental aspects. Of course, it should be noted that with the expansion of security to other dimensions, the range of potential security issues has become broader and more extensive. When a threat becomes a national security issue is a question whose answer depends on the type of threat, how it is perceived, and its level of seriousness. Factors affecting the seriousness of the threat include: the clarity of the identity and nature of the threat, whether it is political, military, etc., its immediacy or proximity in terms of distance, the likelihood of its occurrence, the potential consequences, and whether historical conditions and circumstances strengthen the threat. If the situation is equal in every respect, the more serious the threat, the more justifiable the recourse to national security for responding to it will be. Of course, Buzan acknowledges that under current conditions, these variables are not measurable and cannot even be easily estimated accurately. They often occur in very complex situations where weighing them in the spectrum of serious threats is very difficult. (Buzan 1991, 158-160)

**Fifth. Emphasis on non-security policies**

The nature of security threats is such that conventional methods and approaches in politics cannot overcome security issues, and other tools are needed. "Securitization means that every problem inherently carries a type of threat that needs to be stopped, but the way to address these threats varies across different issues." Therefore, the meaning of securitization is also different (Gheisari 2014, 38-39)

According to Buzan, the backwardness of the concept of security is embedded in the argument that policymakers in governments have strong reasons to maintain its ambiguity. In fact, resorting to national security to justify government actions and policies (which otherwise would need to be proven necessary) is considered a very simple political tool for defending the interests of various types of governments. Security-making is a process that leads to placing certain issues within the framework of security, even though they were not previously in this domain. The government, by perceiving an issue as a security matter, attempts to: 1) assign itself the primary role, 2) externalize the direction of the threat, 3) thereby create an "other," and under its guise, provide a centralized response to an imaginary threat that may not even be relevant. In this context, the Copenhagen School seeks to remove the security burden from ordinary issues. According to Barry Buzan, a successful policy is one that can move issues out of the security realm and into the political realm (Nasri 2002, 51).

Perhaps the action of the followers of the Copenhagen School in not considering ordinary events as security issues is a response to the universalism of realists who, in a warlike environment, viewed the state as the only actor, external threats as the only danger, and military reaction as the final response.

**Sixth. Explanation of the four levels of security**

Buzan and his colleagues, in their latest views and opinions, have presented security at four levels: international, regional, national, and societal. Weaver has proposed societal security as the most effective way to understand the issue of security in his article titled "Liberalism and Security: The Contradictions of the Liberal Leviathan." Buzan and his colleagues recognize interdependence and connection among all four levels of security analysis. In this regard, Buzan states: "Due to the political structure of states, the international political system is



considered the most important habitat for countries." In fact, the political relationship between states and the international system is so close that an independent discussion about them is prone to serious errors" (Buzan 1991, 171)

#### **Seventh. Emphasis on the relationship between security and social resilience**

Resilience means the ability of a community to sustain its life and core nature under changing conditions and potential or active threats, often considered a form of national security policy. The strategy and its method involve conscious efforts to diversify responsibilities, agents, and actors from the governmental level to the social level. This means that the production of security is brought closer to real and non-state actors. Resilience is usually defined as a characteristic of a community or political actor such as a government, country, society, province, or ethnicity in Societal security, the product of which will ultimately be an effort and strategy to preserve identity. (Aatola and Juntunen 2018, 34)

#### **2.2.3. Insecurity, threats, and harms in the theory of societal security**

Societal security is clearly threatened and harmed by various actors, including governmental, non-governmental, and foreign actors. Societal insecurity arises when societies, regardless of their type, recognize the development and potential existence of threats to their survival. (Saleh 2020, 232)

Government accountability can protect societal security against external threats, but at the same time, the increase in government power can sometimes pose a threat to society. This tension arises when the political independence of the state and its territorial integrity policies threaten the identity of society and social groups. This phenomenon is referred to as territorial attachment. These threats have a dual nature, meaning that Weaver states that questioning the ideology and stances of the political system that legitimizes the state by society can lead to insecurity. (Saleh 2020, 233)

Identity threat and harm to it are considered one of the main threats, which have various dimensions. The principle of respecting the values of other ethnicities and groups has been accepted as a fundamental principle in societal security. Weaver suggests that "for



communities under threat, a clear line of defensive reactions is the strengthening of social identity." This can be achieved by using cultural tools to strengthen social cohesion and differentiation and ensuring that the society effectively reproduces itself. (Saleh 2020, 235) If the government fails to reconcile its relationship with society, conflict and confrontation are likely to occur. That is why any form of discrimination by the government or the majority group will be the first step in creating violence and disrupting national security. These discriminations, in order of priority, include: a- national and ethnic identity, b- religious identity, c- gender, d- disability, e- other forms of direct discrimination based on a group's characteristics, and f- political persecution or murder for political beliefs. (Chifu, Nantoi and Sushko 2008, 14) All of these factors disrupt social and national cohesion and lead to the segregation of minority groups.

#### **2.2.4. The relationship between the state and policy in the theory of societal security**

Although the Copenhagen School considers the reference of societal security to be the group and society, and does not see the state as the only actor in security, the state still plays a key and primary role in establishing societal security policies. "The government pays attention to the needs of the people, and on the other hand, citizens accept the government's role in controlling potential chaos and civil disorder with coercive tools and other governmental mechanisms." (Buzan 1991, 43)

This definition by Buzan indicates that national security policy is a form of the role, intervention, and use of decisive mechanisms by the government, which manifests in achieving important security objectives. Therefore, the function of the policy institution, which is influenced by external and internal factors, is of great importance.

Government policy should be accompanied by wisdom and a comprehensive perspective; otherwise, the implementation of policies lacking scientific and environmental backing may lead to an uncontrolled cultural-identity autonomy moving towards political, cultural, and territorial separation, which in turn threatens societal security and national security.

### **3. Research findings**

The theory of "Societal Security" aims to reduce the security burden of issues and prevent the securitization of the country's environment. The expansion of new dimensions of the societal security theory will help somewhat alleviate the weaknesses in national security policy.

The new and different perspective of Asghar Eftekhari has made identity not just a subset and part of security in the theory of societal security, but it has itself become a security discourse. Through this perspective, several important criteria were added to the views of other scholars in this field, including: one - positive interaction between the government and the people, two - values and normative beliefs, three - human education, and four - shared collective interests.

### **3.1. Analytical findings**

Since the development of all concepts of the societal security theory is not balanced and proportional, they lack the necessary credibility and applicability for utilization in the national security policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Therefore, in this perspective, in accordance with the Iranian-Islamic structure, values, and principles of Islamic worldview, the concepts of societal security have been emphasized, redefined, or completed. According to this theory, "Societal security" refers to the definition, analysis, and management of security based on confidence in the health and efficiency of social identity within the framework of social values and norms in each society. Below, we address some of the concepts that have been previously mentioned but have been redefined and completed in the indigenous theory:

#### **3.1.1. Non-polarization and discrimination**

This principle, known as the principle of sanctity under the theory of Ummah in Islam, emphasizes that all individuals in the Islamic community are equal and that simply being a Muslim grants them sanctity, which in turn increases security.

- Identity, norms, and values: These concepts are shaped based on a lofty goal and religious rituals. Human identity arises from the position of being God's vicegerent and is understood in accordance with human adaptability to God's command, which calls for faith and its acceptance. Therefore, norms and values such as love among Muslims to reduce social tensions, affection and respect and consideration for others to regulate social relations, brotherhood to

strengthen social solidarity, and respect for the rubā' (tribal characteristics as sub-thoughts) are considered as Islamic rituals and norms. (Eftekhari 2015, 18-21)

### **3.1.2. Reference of security**

Since the principle of "unity" is fundamental in Islamic discourse and all diversities are interpreted and understood based on "monotheism," there exists a kind of convergence in the nature of existence. As a result, the Islamic discourse understands "socially constructed security" in accordance with and under "unity" and refers to "shared collective identity" as the main reference for socially constructed security. When individuals in society are sensitive to each other's fate. A single social identity will be formed, which entails compassion and public responsibility towards the community. (Eftekhari 2013, 200)

#### **3.1.2.1. The relationship and manner of interaction between the state and society**

From this perspective, although the "state" and "state considerations" still play a role in security-making, this presence is not defined as "political" and "power-centric." Therefore, contrary to the positivist model where we witnessed state-centric security-making, here "society-centric" has become the norm. Social primacy has led to legitimacy, efficiency, and rule of law being proposed as points of connection between the state and society, thereby limiting power in this regard. Moreover, the sources of state power are not merely hardware-based, but also include soft power resources. With this explanation that both types of these resources are influenced by "civil participation" (in both its negative and positive forms, which include control and support). The result is that societal security is the product of the interaction between the state and society and the establishment of social systems. (Eftekhari 2013, 333)

#### **3.1.2.2. Resources of security**

In Societal security, the resources of security go beyond material resources in worldly schools and are based on other spiritual components such as monotheism, truth, happiness, guardianship (the authority given by God to individuals in choosing the right path from the wrong), piety (which leads to the further development of goodness in society and creates strong protection for individuals and society), the pure-hearted (individuals through whom God's confirmations and

blessings flow due to their faith), and steadfast martyrdom. Additionally, besides hard power resources, the basis of security in Islamic discourse is "awareness and knowledge," and attention to soft power resources with the aim of moralizing the social space and avoiding coercion and favoring collective acceptance and persuasion is prioritized. These characteristics are focused on the fundamental criteria of human education. (Eftekhari 2013, Chapter 4 & 6)

### **3.1.2.3. Collective common interests**

Just as a person pursues their own "interests" regardless of whether they are positive or negative, the collective space is also influenced by "common interests," which have both healthy and unhealthy aspects, as well as affirmative and negative dimensions. In this context, if the priority and precedence lie with the "common interests" and these interests do not contradict the decree of God, they are considered as the "affirmative aspect" to be chosen and taken into account. If the collective interest manifests in an unhealthy and negative way, then anti-values in society become normalized with the support of the majority. (Eftekhari 2013, 462) For example, the laws supporting homosexuality in the West, which stem from a purely negative and unhealthy common desire. The expression of the concept of "collective common interests" and its aspects and dimensions is important in the proposed model because, when discussing the achievement of "maximum social benefit" in a rational approach, the criteria for selection should be clear and specific. In the figure below, the selected components of societal security have been depicted to achieve the desired research model.

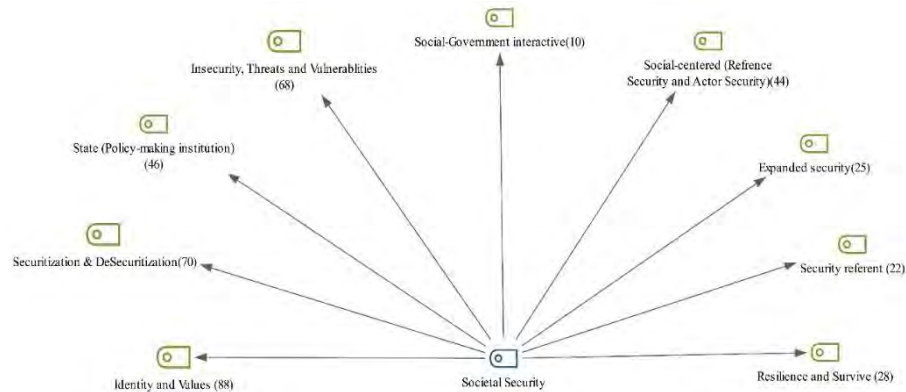


Figure 4- Selected components of societal security theory

### 3.2. Inferential finding

Societal security is evaluated as a "productive" concept rather than a "constructive" one. The difference between "building" and "producing" in the security and social domain lies in their methods. This means that "building" is evaluated as a closed process within the realm of the state. Which finds meaning and significance within the network of causal relationships. Whereas "production" evokes social interaction, in which relationships are not fixed and causal but evolve and shape according to social conditions. With this interpretation, "making" aligns with the positivist philosophy in the field of security studies, whereas "producing" is a concept belonging to interpretive and critical philosophies (which are inherently interactive). (Eftekhari 2013, 327)

In the context of managing societal security, one should not overlook material components; rather, it can even be claimed that material components play the primary role while spiritual components serve as complementary (Eftekhari 2013, 347). Therefore, the application of material components and a systemic, institutional, and procedural perspective is essential for addressing the phenomena arising from the modern state, apparatus, and governing institutions. Societal security, in terms of epistemology, has a software-like nature and, in terms of management, possesses a material-spiritual structure (with a focus on and predominance of material dimensions). (Eftekhari 2013, 348)

Therefore, to achieve the desired model, material structures must also be considered. The most important material structure is the structure of the policy institution, into which needs and desires are inputted, and this institution is responsible for processing data and delineating appropriate outputs.

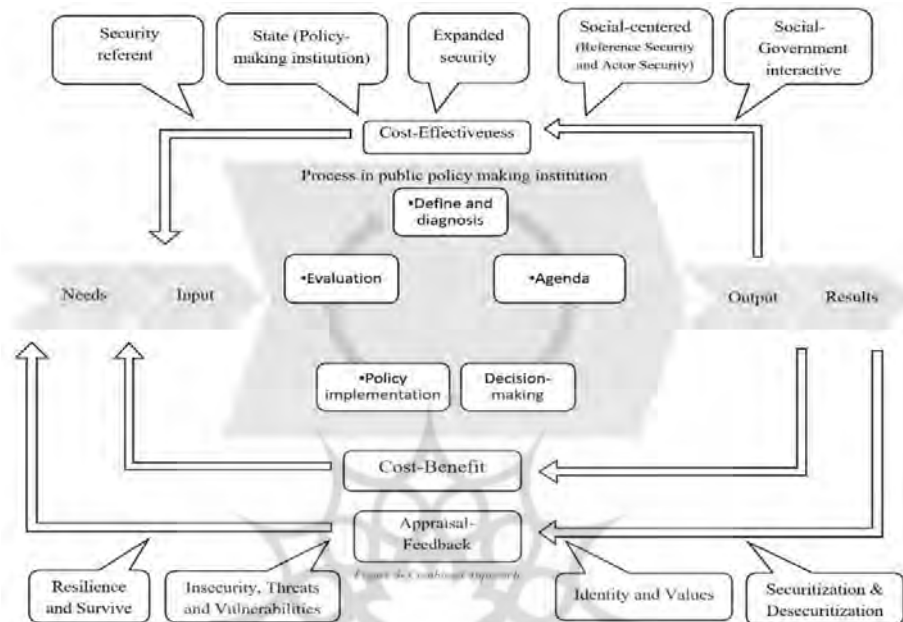
The model and method of the selected public policy theory here consist of systemic, institutional, and rational-process approaches. Each of these approaches has its own advantages and disadvantages, and combining them can cover their weaknesses and provide a more comprehensive model. The main framework of this model is formed by the systems approach. Because the steps of policy (needs, processing, and output) illustrate cost-benefit analysis, cost-effectiveness, feedback, and monitoring in the simplest possible way. The major role of the government as a policymaker and implementer of security policies is carried out in the data processing section. However, the systemic approach is silent in describing the actions within the policy institution. In other words, the biggest gap in this approach is that Easton is indifferent to what happens within the policy apparatus and to how policies are formed and implemented. (Spiegeleire 2012, 165)

Each institution has a structure within which its inherent tasks are carried out through processes. The structure of the institution is influenced by the physical environment and the material ecosystem (composed of internal and external factors). The examination of the institutional structure and the manner of process execution has been overlooked in the systemic approach. Therefore, comprehensive coverage and achieving the desired model require addressing the overlooked points. The examination and analysis of the structure of the policy institution necessitates the application of an institutional approach, which is essentially the study and review of formal-legal arrangements. The criticism raised about the institutional approach is that it has expanded the scope of this model by emphasizing structuring and environmental conditions as effective factors in policy and describing it through elements such as law. Although this criticism is valid, the reason for choosing this approach is the direct connection of the national security policy institution in Iran with the constitution



and the influence of internal and external factors on its functioning and structure. After the formation of the desired model, the emergence and necessity of choosing the institutional approach can be observed in the covariance matrix table. The intervention of the institutional approach can lead to the discovery of new dimensions of the impact of variables on outcomes, which will result in a more comprehensive coverage of the aspects of national security policy in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The processing section or processing box in the proposed model is significant from two perspectives: First, ensuring that all stages of policy and the internal cycle sequence are carried out correctly, while simultaneously adhering to the considerations of each stage (such as evaluating all possible options and selecting the appropriate one, executing the chosen option without obstacles, achievable goals and options, and the absence of issues in the goal achievement process). Second, the stages of the policy cycle should be differentiated so that in the various stages of this cycle, the selected components can be considered as necessary principles. As a result, we will witness the impact of the component during each stage. The process-rational approach possesses the two aforementioned characteristics. Therefore, alongside the institutional analysis model, the process-rational analysis model is incorporated within the processing stage of the systemic approach to achieve a more comprehensive model.

In addition to the combination of approaches and their stages, the processing takes place within a framework where selected components of Societal security are incorporated as essential indicators. In this discursive framework, societal security acts as the central signifier of the discourse, with other components of the discourse surrounding it. As a result, the impact of each selected component is examined at each stage of the mixed approach, and the effect of these indicators can be extracted at each stage.



## Conclusion

The issue addressed in this research is the development of a model derived from scientific theories, which can both implement the policy process scientifically and tailor the selected criteria of this model to the theory of societal security. To answer the question of what the appropriate approach to national security policy based on Societal security is? From the combination of public policy discussions and selected considerations derived from the analysis of Societal security, an optimal and effective analytical-combinatorial model was presented, which is suitable for the political, cultural, social, and economic conditions of the country and the current requirements of Iran, the region, and the world on one hand, and in accordance with the structural, institutional, and ideological characteristics of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the other hand.

The present analytical model, as a significant achievement of this article, provides the possibility of improving the national security policy process and specializing it based on the indicators of the societal security theory. This allows national security policymakers to use its mechanisms to identify potential weaknesses and vulnerabilities in the

national security policy process, similar to a precise scientific template and an analyzable and evaluable analytical model. Subsequently, they can propose strategies that align with the current conditions of the country and correspond to various topics in the field of Iran's national security.

The outcome of this analytical model will be a matrix table of the correlation between variables related to national security policy and selected indicators of Societal security, through which the impact of each selected indicator on various stages of national security policy can be evaluated and the necessary pathology conducted based on the relevant components.



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