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Mass Murder in “Vladislav Ribnikar” Primary School: Victimization of Students, a Consequence of the Non-Existence of the “Safe School” Concept and Crime Prevention

Jasmina Igrački¹, Tatjana Z. Skakavac², Dragan A. Manojlović³

¹*Institute for Criminological and Sociological Research, Belgrade, Serbia*
jasminaigracki@yahoo.com

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0533-9033>

²*Faculty of Legal and Business Studies, Dr. Lazar Vrkatić University, Belgrade, Serbia*
tatjana.skakavac@gmail.com

³*Prof. dr Dragan Manojlović, Full Professor at the Faculty of Legal and Business Studies,*
Dr. Lazar Vrkatić University, Belgrade, Serbia
detore1914@gmail.com

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6120-0220>

Abstract. The criminal event — the mass murder of students at the “Vladislav Ribnikar” school in Belgrade, on May 3, 2023, as a form of mass victimization of students, raised many questions, much more in the lay world and significantly less in the scientific or professional public: Was it possible recognize from the student’s behavior that in the future (immediate, near, distant, upcoming...) he will take action to take the lives of students in the school he attends? Can we talk about the statistically inevitable “Black Swan” in the attack on students? Is the attack on students a consequence of the perception of school security in the security system of the Republic of Serbia? Research results show that such attacks can be predicted and prevented. Furthermore, based on the results of the research, it is concluded that in the Republic of Serbia in 2001, a pilot program of the “Safe Schools” model was launched, which lasted for four years and after 2004, it stopped being implemented as part of the prevention of crime in the local community through the program “Safe Communities”. The research results show that in the Republic of Serbia there is no: “Code of school safety and safety behavior”; Law on safe school, students and school staff adopted by the National Assembly; “Declaration on the safety of students, teachers, professors and the school” as an initial document for the safety of the school, students and teachers; “National Center for School Safety”; “School Safety Office” in cities and local governments; personnel for auditing school safety; training for leadership in school security, and does not understand that the application of layered protection of students and the school as elements of support for the educational process, students, school staff and the school is necessary.

Mass Murder in “Vladislav Ribnikar” Primary School: Victimization of Students...

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Keywords: criminal event, mass murder, students, school, safe school, crime prevention, victimization, security, training, leadership, layered protection, educational process

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Научная статья

Массовое убийство в начальной школе «Владислав Рибникар»: виктимизация учащихся как следствие отсутствия концепции «Безопасная школа» и профилактики преступности

Жасмина Игראчки¹, Татьяна З. Скакавац², Драган А. Манойлович³

¹Институт криминологических и социологических исследований,
Белград, Республика Сербия
jasminaigracki@yahoo.com

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0533-9033>

²Факультет права и бизнеса, Университет им. доктора Лазаря Вркатича,
Белград, Республика Сербия
tatjana.skakavac@gmail.com

³Факультет права и бизнеса, Университет им. доктора Лазаря Вркатича,
Белград, Республика Сербия
detore1914@gmail.com

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6120-0220>

Аннотация. Криминальное событие — массовое убийство учеников в школе «Владислав Рибникар» в Белграде 3 мая 2023 года, как форма массовой виктимизации учащихся, вызвало множество вопросов, гораздо больше в светском мире и значительно меньше в научной или профессиональной среде: Можно ли было распознать по поведению ученика, что в будущем (ближайшем, отдаленном, предстоящем...) он предпримет действия, направленные на лишение жизни учеников школы, которую он посещает? Можно ли говорить о нападении на учеников как о статистически неизбежном событии типа «черного лебедя»? Является ли нападение на учеников следствием понимания места школьной безопасности в системе безопасности Республики Сербия? Результаты исследования показывают, что подобные нападения можно предсказать и предотвратить. Кроме того, на основании результатов исследования сделан вывод, что в Республике Сербия в 2001 году была запущена пилотная программа проекта «Безопасные школы», которая просуществовала четыре года и после 2004 года перестала реализовываться как часть профилактики преступности в местном сообществе в рамках программы «Безопасные сообщества». Результаты исследования показывают, что в Республике Сербия отсутствуют: «Кодекс школьной безопасности и безопасного поведения»; Закон о безопасной школе, учениках и школьном персонале, принятый Национальным собранием; «Декларация о безопасности учеников, учителей, преподавателей и школы» как первоначальный документ по безопасности школы, учеников

и учителей; «Национальный центр школьной безопасности»; «Офис школьной безопасности» в городах и местных органах власти; персонал для аудита школьной безопасности; обучение руководства школьной безопасности, и нет понимания, что применение многоуровневой защиты учащихся и школы как элементов поддержки образовательного процесса, учащихся, школьного персонала и школы является необходимым.

Ключевые слова: ученики, виктимизация, массовые убийства, безопасная школа, профилактика преступлений

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You are angels born to live.
You had the right to the peaceful enjoyment
of your rights and the right to life.
The citizens of the Republic of Serbia
are responsible for your violent death.
Dedicated to eternal memory.

*Dragan Manojlović
(September 2023)*

1. Introduction

Socially unacceptable behavior of young people has changed over time, both in its forms of manifestation and in terms of the causes and conditions that cause it. The direction of these changes was moving in the direction of more and more frequent occurrences and more drastic manifestations of this behavior, which was a consequence, first of all, of the development of society and the complexity of social relations, and thus the creation of a greater number of factors and circumstances that predispose young people to this kind of behavior [18, p. 186].

All living beings are afraid of violence [49, p. 211–227]. Everyone is afraid of the death of children at school [31, p. 145–160]. All children in school have the right to life [54]. Students and schools and their victimization in the Republic of Serbia are the subject of research in this paper. The goal of the work is to offer a new view and approach to school security through the development of its own “Safe School” model in order to prevent further victimization. How to establish a resistant

(high-quality) security environment for the school and students against threats and victimization [52]. Therefore, from the perspective of student safety and school climate, school violence can be defined as “any action that negatively affects the safety climate within the school” [8]. According to many authors, “school violence creates a climate of fear and emotional unrest” is an obstacle to the learning process and affects the educational mission of the school [1; 47; 19; 29].

A number of researchers believe “that school violence is not only obvious actions, such as shootings and physical fights, but also a subtly expressed school climate that can cause fear and victimization in any student” [8]. Examples of this point of view are many: “that the student does not speak in class for fear of being ridiculed; verbal teasing and insults; offensive touching such as poking, slapping and pushing; sexist comments based on a student’s physical appearance, mean or insulting words and looks, slapping, hitting, tripping, hair pulling, or covert acts

(eg, ostracizing, manipulating friendships, ignoring or violating someone's wishes or rights) can be seen as bullying" [41], and many other verbal or non-verbal actions that victimize students. The authors, Hazler et al., reported to the public the results of their research, where they found, "that three-quarters of the school's students of those surveyed indicated that they had experienced harassment and bullying to the extent that they suffered from academic, personal and social difficulties" [15]. Based on the above, it can be understood that the victimization of students through school violence can be both obvious and insidious, and deeply affect the safety school climate. Also, it can be said that the safety school climate is made up of some related factors, such as: attitude, feeling and behavior of individuals, school systems and others.

The problem of victimization and safety in schools is a global issue of great concern and crosses political, economic, geographic, racial and even gender boundaries [57]. When we talk about the Republic of Serbia, the results of the research conducted at the end of August 2023 show that 93% of parents whose children attend school believe that their concern for the safety of children in schools is justified.

In theory, one can find points of view that plead, "that multi-level security analyzes in schools have shown significant deficiencies in recognizing student behavior and managing behavior in school" [37]. Prevention in the initial phase of aggressive and disruptive behavior such as bullying, fights and arguments, as well as many other activities that disturb students such as: restlessness, violent submission to the will of others, terrorizing, racketeering, use of tools and weapons in confrontations between students, creating gangs by students within schools, drug sales, and the greatest gains in addressing the security challenges in today's schools and preventing student victimization [37].

Problematic behavior understood as "normal" deviating student behavior without safety analysis and understanding of the content of that behavior, its direction of development, reduces the quality of the safety environment for students, inhibits negative relationships with classmates. It also creates

a condition that reduces the time teachers spend in teaching, which in turn negatively affects students' academic abilities and performance in the future [16]. Unsafe environment at school (because they don't see a protector), due to the fear of aggression from individuals who "bully" everyone, or from a group of students they call "small gangs" they begin to project their defense mechanism (their safety): "What should I do to not be a victim?". Often the answer lies in the fact that they need to acquire some means (even a weapon) with which they will defend themselves from experiencing the bullying that they had the opportunity to see — what some students who had contact with those "small gangs" "experienced" [9].

Research also shows that those communities and schools that rely on the belief that student and school safety will be at an "adequate" desirable level, if pedagogues, psychologists, teachers, or other school personnel increase their own efficacy (self-efficacy) [4; 22; 48; 50], and even the collective, are in error, and a waste of time for the introduction of the safe school model [6, p. 1090–1100; 12, p. 44–46; 55, p. 286–308]. It was observed that "teachers and other school personnel see an increase in efficiency in preventing students' deviant behavior in the more frequent use of punishment, which often causes unwanted effects through student resistance to such school methods-procedures" [20].

The ability of school staff to "organize safe classrooms and the school and manage safety mechanisms to guide student behavior in a non-conflictual direction is at an extremely low level" [35]. Therefore, the practical ability of school staff "to apply safety mechanisms in interventions aimed at increasing the efficiency of student, teacher and school safety should be an important segment of effective practice in the prevention and reduction of 'problematic' behavior that threatens the right of students to peacefully enjoy their rights at school" [10, p. 75].

2. A safe school has no "legs of its own"

Do we know what security is in order to confront insecurity in the school and its organization? First of all, security is a specific social activity (at the same time it can be understood that it is: creation, force,

product, achievement, medicine, doctor, or performance, etc.), it does not have “its own legs” but its legs, body and spirit citizens, society, community and state. It is social in many ways. Firstly, safety as an activity for the purpose of establishing the concept of “Safe Schools”, is purposefully and purposefully carried out by society, i.e. at the same time, special parts of society: bodies, organizations, individuals authorized by society. It is also social in that its results in society (society itself) are used in various areas of human and social life, including school. With its results, security in various ways and mechanisms causes, stimulates or in other ways acts on changes in society, enables society to develop its abilities in a peaceful way, from the lowest level of organization to the state, but also certain changes in nature, therefore also in school and its environment.

Security is a science, but also a dynamic, complex and structured social phenomenon and process. Security is a social phenomenon because it can be identified as a social reality — it is a factor (inevitable link) of social importance. Why is it said about security that it is not a static factor (essentiality) of social reality but a dynamic one? Because it changes together with society, it acts internally and externally on society and society on it and on social relations. Security and its complexity emerges from the complex social reality, from the multitude of his and her factors.

If we say that security is structured, and it is, it means that it is built by basic but also essential factors that many believe can be changeable and stable. On the other hand, it is believed that its structure is built by a set of properties, without which it would not be a science and a social phenomenon that can be identified as a specific social reality. In order to support ourselves, the content of safety from the aspect of research and its role in the safety of schools and students, we will use the position of Professor Force, who says: “safety is a prerequisite for the survival and development of man and his communities. In short, the concept of security is defined as the absence of threats to the reference object of security. The reference object of security, depending on the observed concept, can be a person, the state and the international

community. Any concept we consider, its key reference object is man” [13], we would add: student, teacher, professor, school, other school personnel.

3. Safety behavior at school: Preventing victimization

As Anna Maria Ndeto states based on research, “students are key actors and the most important resources in education, it is absolutely necessary to guide students to show acceptable attitude and behavior within and outside of school” [35]. In an attempt to achieve an organized and safe school environment and maintain law and order—safety in the school, the community and its bodies as the holders and management of the school determine the rules and regulations that will guide the activities of the members of the educational institution and safety within the school. Student discipline is a prerequisite for almost everything a school can offer students [32]. Many researchers such as Seifert and Warnberg justifiably link discipline with the school’s culture and safety climate [44]. Thus, according to them: “in order to have a satisfactory safety climate within the school, there must be a certain level of discipline” [44]. In schools where discipline is a “serious” problem, for example, where students bully others, parents can “enroll” their children in “better” schools. But did that solve the problem of the safety of other students? No, it is most often complicated because the originators of insecurity do not feel the consequences of disciplinary measures, but notice that they are powerful, because they influenced someone to leave school thanks to them and on the other hand, to be careful in the application of measures, the punishment can worsen the behavior instead of curbing it. The highest level of ability of all participants in the chain of decision-making in school safety is found in maintaining a safety climate for the peaceful enjoyment of the student’s right to study and stay at school, and simultaneously eliminating the causes of endangerment. As the author Dorsey believes, “the school climate includes four key relationships: the relationship of students to themselves; towards peers; students’ attitude towards their parents and the community;

students' attitudes toward their school staff, including teachers, administrators, and all other staff" [8].

The skill of behavior in the school and the school environment by school staff, parents, students and those responsible for safety in society as a whole is an important segment of the overall safe school program. What are behavioral skills and their recognition? In science, it is believed that behavioral skills are those abilities that influence how a person communicates with others in his environment and reacts to certain situations [5]. By developing the ability (knowledge) of participants, parents, teaching and other school staff and officers responsible for safety in the safe school program – to scan and recognize certain behaviors, some of the elements of early warning are acquired, which are the basis of preventing the occurrence of unwanted consequences for students and the school. This knowledge can help the safe school program to detect those behaviors that will lead to a specific course of action – most often unwanted behavior that deviates from normal non-conflictual behavior. The scanning and recognition skills of an early warning program within a safe school can focus attention not only on a specific person, but also on their emotions and even their thoughts. Namely, it is believed based on the scientific results so far, that knowledge such as scanning and recognition of behavioral phenomena in the safe school program can be applied by the so-called preventers "invisible observers" (with unobtrusive, non-threatening methods...) also called "preventer arbitrator" who will help to prevent unwanted consequences in a timely manner.

According to many researchers, in order for the ability of the preventer in the safe school program to have its effectiveness through scanning and recognizing behavior in the environment (signals that indicate deviant behavior), it is necessary for the participants in the safe school program to be: committed, responsible, to have confidence in the program, that they have received safety code training. On the other hand, preventers should innovate their knowledge during the duration of the program (while they are in the safe schools program) [26, p. 113–117];

to have systematicity; to have analytical knowledge [3, p. 91].

What is the basis of security beliefs that one can timely scan and recognize behavior that ("might") move in the direction of an "accident" or a criminal event with consequences? From the achievements so far in the prevention of security threats, which carry challenges, risks and threats, several findings have been derived that indicate that threats do not occur at the moment when a person is attacked. The phenomenon of endangering security in its essence has several dimensions: time dimension – duration, geographical dimension – where it took place (topographical element... space: where the bearer of the phenomenon lives, where he moves – looking for crime, etc. [38, p. 525–540]; the speed with which the bearer of the threatening phenomenon (transmits) transforms his actions from a challenge into a risk, threat and immediate attack; the dimension of the force that carries the threats of endangerment; the dimension of other participants in carrying the threatening phenomenon (helpers, inspirers, etc.); the dimension of the scale of the frequency of contacts – the frequency of "time intervals", etc.; the dimension of the scope of the crowding phenomenon; the dimension of the locus of control; the dimension of the force that will be developed during the attack: scope, means [46]. In particular, it is indicated that at least four of the mentioned elements have an unavoidable role in the behavior of the occurrence of security threats, such as: scope, duration, geographical element and means [7] and actor dimensions [21].

4. "Black Swan" and a safe school

Some approaches in science and literature to interpret events in schools, such as "black swan", "perfect crime" or "memory crime", when looking at violent acts (deprivation of life) against innocent victims such as children, use are – indiscriminately – to describe what is unimaginable or extremely improbable. These metaphors were used as a response to wait for an accident (crime) to occur before taking early warning, prevention and risk management measures, both in the school environment and within the school. These approaches represent different types

of uncertainty (epistemic and aleatory). Rationality as defined in the security aspect leads to a combination of both types of uncertainty in a single measure of credibility and takes into account only risk aversion. This article presents a security risk analysis perspective on the school problem, using all available information to support active risk management decisions and taking into account both types of uncertainty.

Measures to establish a safe school include monitoring signals (indicators), cursors and potential-imminent-possible “failures” in security — delay in responding to an upcoming threat, as well as systems for strengthening the strategy of responding to incidents of threats to school security. It also includes a careful examination of the organizational factors of safety in the school, community and authorities responsible for community safety, such as the system of recognition of phenomena that shape the future safety performance of resources (human and technical) and affect the reduction or complete elimination of the risk of errors. In school security, as can be understood from previous knowledge, in all cases, including rare events, if the security system relies on the statistical quantification of “Black Swan” risks, it does not allow itself to “predict” potential accidents and disasters. Only a dynamic security analysis allows one to observe and understand the occurrences of threats to safety in the school at the same time, and in the early warning phase, which enables effective risk management to be supported, and to respond in a timely manner to potential-yet-unmaterialized events. Such criminal events, such as attacks on students in schools, are very unacceptable to the public, they are difficult to understand or explain, and are they almost impossible to predict? In theory and professional practice, everything indicates that such a criminal attack was preceded by clear indicators that he will perform. The indicators could be recognized several months or days before the actual realization of the attacker’s ideas. The attacker left signals, which had to be deciphered and responded to preventively [14, p. 229–281]. Also, based on research results, after analyzing criminal attacks in

schools on students by students, scientists believe that “most violence in schools is it does not happen overnight, but develops over a long period that can be recognized” [51].

With this work, we wanted to point out that the occurrence of crime in school is the result of the lack of adequate security knowledge and the working model of the security system (security code of knowledge) for the “framing” of unique mechanisms for fighting crime. Implicit approaches of the current security system and its crime control mechanisms are at the level and in the sphere of “memorial landmarks”, which leads to the creation of a reaction through “patches” for some perceived “holes” in the treatment of the existing security system in Serbia.

To the current misapplication of security logic as a routine post-crime activity through a “physical labor model” that chalks bodies on the sidewalk, with an unknown future number of “necessary” police officers in physical presence, we propose introducing a new security lens through a scientific interpretation of the connection between security and security challenges, risks and threats and a new (not an extension of the old) organizational structure of organs and units within the security system itself¹.

Security challenges, risks and threats cannot be seen and understood as statistical inevitabilities in the third millennium. Of course, the political discourse is no stranger to the fact that the mass murder at the “Vladislav Ribnikar” school, he understands, is still viewed by the Serbian security system as a statistical inevitability, which confirms the certainty of the same inevitability in the future (murder at the school).

In the well-known research for the understanding of crime, professors Felson Marcus and Rachel Boba, in their work “Crime and everyday life”, point out on a scientific basis: “Our lives are not random, so why should crime be like that” (Felson, Boba, 2010). So, life is not a random thing. Can we claim that in life we will meet a killer who

¹ The Ministry of Internal Affairs, for example, does not have in its structure: Directorate of Internal Security, Directorate of Public Order Police, Criminal Directorate, Directorate of Preventive Police, and many other units...

will want to kill us? Not. Can we claim that in our life we will meet a killer who will want to kill us? Not. What then is the ignorance of those who took the position "...it happened to us..."? What they don't know is that in the deadly attack that took place at the "Vladislav Ribnikar" school in Belgrade on May 3, 2023, there was no accidental encounter between the attackers on the one hand and the victims on the other, but the deadly attack was carried out in the circumstances of the geographical, typological, criminological, security and criminal aspects that are scientifically deciphered as the phenomenon of the attacker's behavior "...knows how things work here...". Furthermore, this is not a meeting of strangers by situational principle, nor can the principle be recognized here: a hunter or a poacher who travels in search of crime. From all the above, there is no reason to believe that this is a deadly attack that could be included in the "Black Swan".

5. The current policy of countering security threats in the Republic of Serbia is a direct contribution to the criminal event at the "Vladislav Ribnikar" school and the victimization of students

The attack does not come "out of thin air" can be understood from the available scientific literature. As can be concluded, those who investigate the phenomena of threats in security, believe that any attack that happened at school against students has certain (inevitable) stages until its materialization [56]. Here we will mention only a few, on the way to an attack: conceptualization of a potential attack; categorization of met/e/a; advancing on the way to the place and target of the attack; determining the geographic position of the target and the place of the attack—topographical phase; determining the means by which the attack will be carried out; making the final decision to carry out the attack; signaling to the environment that an attack will be carried out; carrying out an attack—materializing your idea; coding of primary threat sources; defining and deciphering targeted violence; threat assessment with categorization of the potential attacker and characteristics of the target and potential

victim and targeted prevention; undermining the failure of the authorities to fight crime [40, p. 157–172; 53; 56]. Although penal policy is one segment of crime suppression, the causes of crime must be addressed—economic, social, political, population migration, unemployment, etc. The reduction of the crime rate will not be achieved by increasing the prescribed punishments or by raising the special minimum and maximum, and especially not by banning the mitigation of punishment for certain serious crimes [21, p. 187]. The victimological aspect of the abuse of the rights of the minors in the last two decades is increasingly in the centre of attention and interest of society and the state in order to find the most adequate solutions and answers of a preventive nature [25, p. 87].

Crime control policy in the Republic of Serbia is firmly based on waiting for a crime to be committed and for the security system to react. This approach to security, driven by political marketing: arresting in front of cameras "in a visible and demonstrable way" through a "bang effect on the public", rather than preventing future criminal attacks by preventive invisible actions of the security system, rightly suffers popular anger—because of the mass murder that took place in Belgrade at the elementary school "Vladislav Ribnikar" on May 3, 2023, when several people lost their lives¹. On the tragic mass murder at the "Vladislav Ribnikar" school, it is possible to perform a true comprehensive analysis and take a different path in security or "patches" changes to the existing laws to adopt measures that will camouflage failures in the security system. Regarding the "control of crimes in memory" in Serbia, the priority is the application of the mechanism of electronic monitoring of communications, or content in the sphere of information technology (now the Internet), which is only a delay (escape) of the security

¹ The existing mechanisms in the security system of Serbia should not be combed with the "old comb", but a comprehensive, thorough, steady, scientifically (those who know and not just have a diploma) designed program for the creation of a new security system should be started, which will be built by connoisseurs and not combed with knowledge by function—that's not knowledge, that's a mandate...

system to realize its wrong setting. Public pressure to “do something”, should not be understood (often the security system and political power resist it) as signals that bigger problems are being created through the so-called new “quick” emergency solutions, which destructively burden security officials¹.

The current implicit security perspective that underpins all measures to prevent crime against children at school today in the Republic of Serbia is the guard system (police officers in the role of guards are a “physical labor model”) without developing other models². The non-existent scientific and professional setting of the framework of security mechanisms is reflected in the adoption of strategies that are supposed to reduce the risk of victimization by rigorously monitoring the access of persons to the school premises. From all of the above, it can be concluded that the security policy and security system currently present in Serbia are conceptually, scientifically, professionally and empirically defective when it comes to the safety of children at school and safety in Serbia. The ability of the unique – currently present model of the work of the security system in Serbia towards the crimes that will be committed in schools is at a memorial level, as shown by all the events so far. The security system in Serbia understands and observes school security as: physical work of policemen in the model of guards; as improbable “black swans” originating from inevitable statistical random, unpredictable system of events, and as a meteorological category because it believes in the phrase “...happened to us...” may not “more” in the future, which is beyond

scientific and professional understanding the phenomena of endangering security, but looking into the future of the safety of students and citizens through some magical actions shrouded in some mystery.

6. “Safe Schools” model

No species is as destructive as humans, not because of biological traits derived from history, but because of social conditions brought about by history. Human aggression and violence is present in all stages of the development of human civilization [42, p. 469]. At the beginning of 2001, after analyzing the criminal events of attacks on students in schools around the world and contacts with many researchers in the world in the field of criminology, a number of researchers and security officials in Serbia found enough scientific knowledge that confirmed the need for development of the “Safe School” model, in order to prevent a potential attack with deadly weapons or devices on students in schools in the Republic of Serbia in the future³.

³ At the beginning of 2001, the Secretariat of Internal Affairs in Belgrade began, and for the next three years until 2004, developed a pilot model: “Safe Schools” within the “Safe Community” program with crime prevention. Profiles were created for all schools in the territory of Zvezdara municipality in Belgrade: geographical, topographical, criminological – from the history of criminal events in the last ten years; typologically in accordance with the forms of criminal activities; target profile; problem profile; vulnerability profile and others; School Safety Code; Declaration on the safety of students, teachers and schools at the municipal level; profiles of geographic traffic routes – the way students travel to school, and from school to home, with safe the routes that are monitored during events – the arrival or departure of students from school; the Code of Safety Culture was developed and taught by professional police officers to students, teachers, parents and community members; the Council for the Prevention of Crime and narrower bodies for certain areas were formed; crime prevention documents were created that contained the principles of: prevention, prediction, proactiveness, disruption, dispersal of criminal intentions towards the school; constant training of security officers, parents and school staff was carried out on how to recognize whether a “warning bridge” will occur among students; the principles and elements of conflict management are defined; safety areas that directly affect a safe school are defined; constant training was carried out on how to non-contactly profile the occurrence of security threats or non-incriminated deviant behavior that

¹ The new law on weapons and ammunition could have several categories of persons possessing weapons: Possession of weapons with the right to acquire and possess ammunition; Possession of weapons without the right to acquire and possess ammunition, etc... LAW on weapons and ammunition, “Official Gazette of RS”, no. 20 from February 24, 2015, 10 from February 15, 2019, 20 from March 4, 2020, 14 from February 7, 2022. URL: [https://www.pravno-informacionisistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/skupstina/zakon/2015/20/1](https://www.pravno-informacionisistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/skupstina/zakon/2015/20/1(date of application: 05.02.2024).)

² It has come to that: there are more than 30,000 policemen for five million inhabitants of Serbia. More than four decades ago, it had about 18,000 policemen and ten million inhabitants. Doesn't it seem to us that we are not working in the right way in security?

Case study as a basis for starting the concept of "Safe Schools" in Serbia: At the beginning of April 2001, one of the researchers in the field of crimes (mass murders) in schools committed with firearms, addressed the researchers in Serbia with the question: Can he get information about attacks with firearms (mass murders) on students in schools in the Republic of Serbia? He was informed that there are no such attacks on the territory of Serbia. Since this area in Serbia was not of interest to scientists in the field of security at that time, we asked the researcher to provide us with his data on attacks in the world, which he collected as material

carries a challenge, risk and threat; confidentiality requirements are built in; operational procedure standards for a safe school were introduced; all data was fed into the school safety analysis group, which submitted its reports to the Prevention Council at the municipal level with feedback; constant surveys were conducted in order to correct the concept of school and community safety; active unobtrusive monitoring outside the context of the classroom was introduced: hallway, toilet, courtyard, street, etc. – criminal objects were searched; the Information Team, the Development Team and other teams were formed; unreported events – attacks, threats, use or offering of drugs – were searched for by surveying, in order to build a safe space resistant to a possible criminal event; a procedure was introduced: we are investigating; we apply; we investigate; we correct; we apply in a constant circular process. An analysis method was also built in the procedure: *knowledge > analysis = data; use > analysis = information > analytical processing = intelligence > application and measurement*. "Flyers" were created for all elements of prevention, for students, parents, school staff with the title "How to be and stay safe" – especially for each area, such as: prevention of robberies, theft, fights, drugs, explosions, etc. Next to each phone there was a built-in form if a threat of a bombardment was reported, how and what to fill out. Open days were introduced. Vulnerability tests have been built for various areas of crime, and many other contents. Immediately in the first year, out of 18 attacks on students that were qualified as robberies the previous year, after the implementation of the "Safe School" model, one robbery attempt was made on the way to school. The model has been prepared, so that after five years of the pilot project, its implementation in all organizational units of SUP Belgrade will begin – to be implemented in all schools on the territory of the city of Belgrade, beginning in 2005. With the consent of General Milan Obradović, the head of the Belgrade SUP at the time, the model in its development course was presented to European experts at a meeting of police chiefs of the capitals of European countries in 2003. The model was presented by Dragan Manojlović and Dejan Stevanović. The model was then evaluated as a significant improvement in school safety.

for research. After some time, we received a larger database in which, in addition to other attacks, the most recent example was the attack in the morning hours of April 20, 1999, when two high school students named Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold with four rifles and more than thirty homemade bombs, committed mass murder with a deadly attack: they killed a teacher and 12 of their fellow students and wounded 24 more people. At the time, it was the worst mass killing in US history. The diary of one of the killers indicated that they had been planning the massacre for months. The killers also planned to kill themselves at the end of the "slaughter", leaving a suicide note [34]. In an attempt to interpret what happened, a hierarchy of causality (assumptions, preconditions, triggers, etc. that triggered the attack) was adopted. Evidence suggested that the trigger for the shooting in Littleton should be located in the harassment and expulsion of students by a method called: ("Mafia in the coat" – one of the ways – method of mobbing) [23, p. 1447–1464]. The most common lesson after the school shooting was the need for more gun control. An examination of the details of other post-1999 mass killings at schools indicates, however, that the specific gun control measures proposed after the attacks were largely irrelevant and almost certainly would not have prevented the incidents or reduced the death toll, regardless of the law preventing access children with weapons, because the locking of weapons and many other measures are prescribed, such as bans on training children in shooting ranges and other areas, bans on the use of assault weapons, etc. It was noted that focusing on the topic of weapons "distracted" attention from those factors that directly generate attacks, while weapons are only a tool, and not a reason for an attack-mass murder at school [23, p. 1447–1464].

Having looked¹ at the previous history and state of criminality in a number of countries in the world in the area of attacks – mass murders, on students in schools and

¹ The initiator of the concept for building the "Safe School" model together with his collaborators was Prof. PhD Dragan Manojlović [28].

the surroundings of schools, according to the scientifically proven lawfulness of the movement of criminal activities, it was concluded that this type of criminal activity will also reach the territory of the Republic of Serbia, its schools and students. During the month of May 2001, the initial framework of the concept for the prevention of these phenomena was drawn up, and it was proposed that in the Republic of Serbia, the concept and construction of the “Safe School” model be launched, which will be used to meet the coming threat, in order to protect attacks on students in the school and in the school environment.

In order to discuss relations in security, we will quote the understanding in which the well-known researcher in the field of security, professor Forca, states about the relationship between the security of the community and the individual: “...There is no security of the individual, if the community is unsafe. In an unsafe community, additional destruction of an individual can be a strengthening of insecurity (adding fuel to the fire)” [13]. The same author further states: “When it comes to security, two dilemmas of its achievement (individual and general) intersect: 1) the security of the individual leads to the security of the community and 2) the security of the community is a guarantee for the security of the individual. Practice has shown that one should not favor any of the aforementioned dilemmas, but create a meeting strategy between them” [13]¹. Professor Forca states that “among other reasons for the expressed thoughts on security, the primary reason is two fatal disasters in our country, the victims of which were one boy and one adult...” [13]. The following point of view can be explained why right at the very beginning of the development of the initial framework for the establishment of the “Safe School”

model in Serbia, back in 2001, the creator of the model realized that it was necessary to simultaneously initiate and develop a wider context of crime prevention and safety, which is the “Safe Community” model, which was launched in July 2001 as the carrier of the overall safety program in the community where school safety was one segment among many other segments.

The results of the research shown in Table 1 show that: school staff, students and parents do not know what the School Safety Code is; that they have never attended a lecture on the safety code at school; that they cannot list the elements that make up the “Safe Schools” model; that everyone together replaces the rules of conduct at school with the Safety Code; that they do not know whether or not they have the Declaration on the safety of students, schools and teachers. All of the total number of respondents or 105 of them stated in the survey that their school does not have a Checklist in the Plan in crisis situations — they think that there is no Plan either. They don’t even know what it is, what it should contain. This research result practically means that the school staff has no knowledge of the safety code and does not know how it is created and implemented. The “Safe School” model in Serbia cannot be built on the results presented. It is recommended that the School Safety Code be the initial foundation that should be built immediately for all schools, which will include not only schools, school staff, students and parents, but all members of the school community, wider social communities and the wider communities at the national level. The school safety code should enable and invite everyone to feel included in a safe school — our school. The school safety code sets the parameters of acceptable behavior for everyone in the school and the school environment, and assigns individual and institutional responsibility for school safety. The school safety code is central to the school’s educational mission. Researcher Anderson examined safety in a number of schools during research in 1997 and found “that changing the existing climate of insecurity with the School Safety Code can have a significant positive impact on the sense of safety in the school community” [1].

¹ National security. The term national security in our country was not defined in any regulation until 2019, when it was done in the National Security Strategy. That document states: “The national security of the Republic of Serbia is the objective state of protection of its national values and interests from all forms of threats, and the subjective sense of security of the citizens of the Republic of Serbia” (Editor, Božidar Forca, Columns, May 8, 2023).

Table 1 — Results¹ of the August/September 2023 survey on the territory of the Republic of Serbia²

Таблица 1 — Результаты исследования август-сентябрь 2023 г. на территории Республубли Сербия

№ п/п	Questions in the survey	School staff		School students		Parents	
		Not	Yes	Not	Yes	Not	Yes
1	Do you know what the School Safety Code is? [Знаете ли вы, что такое Кодекс школьной безопасности?]	Not	100 %	Not	100 %	Not	100 %
		Yes	0,00 %	Yes	0,00 %	Yes	0,00 %
2	Does your school have the prescribed School Safety Code prominently displayed? [Висит ли в вашей школе на видном месте предписанный Кодекс школьной безопасности?]	Not	100 %	Not	100 %	Not	100 %
		Yes	0,00 %	Yes	0,00 %	Yes	0,00 %
3	Have you attended a lecture on the Safety Code at school? [Слушали ли вы лекцию о Кодексе безопасности в школе?]	Not	100 %	Not	100 %	Not	1,00 %
		Yes	0,00 %	Yes	0,00 %	Yes	0,00 %
4	Can you name the (seven) elements known in professional practice and theory that make up the "Safe School" model? [Можете ли вы назвать (семь) элементов, известных в профессиональной практике и теории, которые составляют модель «Безопасная школа»?]	Not	97,00 %	Not	100 %	Not	99,00 %
		Yes	3,00 %	Yes	0,00 %	Yes	1,00 %
5	Do you know what it is and do you have a Declaration on the safety of the school, students and teachers in your school? [Знаете ли вы, что это такое, и есть ли у вас декларация о безопасности школы, учеников и учителей в вашей школе?]	Not	100 %	Not	100 %	Not	100 %
		Yes	0,00 %	Yes	0,00 %	Yes	0,00 %
6	Do you know what the Checklist contains in the concept of the "Safe Schools" model in crisis situations? [Знаете ли вы, что содержит Контрольный список в концепции модели «Безопасная школа» в кризисных ситуациях?]	Not	100 %	Not	100 %	Not	100 %
		Yes	0,00 %	Yes	0,00 %	Yes	0,00 %

Because violence is a systemic problem not only in the school but also in the community, a systemic effort is needed to address school safety [41]. Effective school violence prevention affects the entire social safety system [36], including safety policies and procedures, as well as unspoken and unwritten norms regarding the values, beliefs, and behavior of individuals in the

school. Furthermore, in the implementation of the safe school model, the fragmentation of the implementation of its concept should be avoided. All segments in the safe school model in responding to violence must act in an integrated and effective manner, including social and academic support, with strict respect, adherence and implementation of the principles for identifying signs and early warning of the possible occurrence of violence in the school.

An important element of the School Safety Code is the contents of the safe school model itself as concepts for responding to violence-potential violence. Those responsible for the implementation of the

¹ The students were surveyed with their consent, presence and consent of their parents.

² It may seem that the sample surveyed of thirty students, thirty parents and thirty school staff members is insufficient, but the finding is more than stable and indicates a lot about the safety of the school, in the school and in the school environment.

safe school model should create a checklist for action planning, which has the following elements: a) prevention; b) intervention, and c) crisis response. Let's list some elements in the concept of a safe school that determine whether a school is safe or not, such as: Do all students know the contents of the Safety Code? Do all students, teaching staff and parents understand the principles behind identifying early warning signs? Do school staff, parents and students know how to respond to immediate warning signs? Do students, school staff and parents understand the principles underlying the intervention? Do students, school staff and parents know what to do in the early intervention phase? Does the school have a prescribed and functional prevention strategy that supports early intervention? Do students, school staff, and parents understand the principles underlying the crisis response? Does the school have a crisis intervention procedure to ensure safety? Do school staff, students and parents know how to respond after a tragedy?

Here is an example of a list that was created and was in use in schools from 2001 to 2004: Checklist for crisis procedures. A crisis plan must deal with many complex contingencies. It should be built from the elements: a step-by-step procedure to use when a crisis occurs. An example follows: Immediately assess life/safety issues; Provide emergency medical assistance; Call, and first inform the police/rescue service; Alert school personnel to the security situation; Activate the crisis communication procedure and the verification system; Secure all areas; Implement evacuation and other procedures to protect students and staff from injury; Taking care of the students during the crisis must be by known persons from the school; Alert persons in charge of various information systems to prevent confusion and misinformation; Notify parents; Contact appropriate local agencies and the school district's public information office; Implement post-crisis procedures, etc. This is just one segment of the crisis checklist that every safe school should have. Everyone: school staff, students, parents and security authorities should be familiar with its contents.

All elements of the Declaration on the safety of students, school staff (teachers, professors, associates, non-teaching staff...)

and the school, as well as the construction of the "Safe School" model itself, with all its concepts and internal content, should be based on principles that reflect common consensus: the government, parents, educators and community members throughout the Republic of Serbia. Let's mention only some of the principles: Every student has the right to study to the best of his ability in safety and peaceful enjoyment of his rights at school; Every student has the right to a safe and caring environment in the learning community; Safety is a prerequisite for learning; A safe school is a responsibility that rests on a community partnership between government ministries, administration, teachers, students, parents, security authorities; The Law on Safe Schools is the basis for the development of the "Safe Schools" model; Prevention is the basic postulate and principle in combating crime at school; Proactive action of the security authorities has primacy in the safety of students, teachers and other school staff; The model of intelligence security analysis and prediction has primacy in deciphering and understanding the phenomena of threats to the safety of students, teaching staff and schools; Peer mediation is a key concept in violence prevention; A progressive safety culture is essential to the safety of the school and its environment; Zero tolerance for weapons, tools, drugs, fights, injuries, abuse, insults, belittling or any other form of active or passive, visible or invisible endangering of other students and school staff; and many others. Certain studies indicate that the tightening of the penal policy I application of a repressive concept towards perpetrators of crimes with elements of violence does not give the expected results, on the contrary, the time spent in prison strengthens their attitudes about the justification of the committed act and, at the same time, they become "victims" in their own environments, but also heroes who sacrifice themselves for "higher goals" [42, p. 468].

From the stated principles, it follows that in order to prevent (resolve) school violence and create a safe-model "Safe School" when it comes to school safety, it is necessary to follow the following path: that the Republic of Serbia first adopt its national Declaration

on Safe Schools, which would be the basis of all other documents and procedures related to the safety of the school, students and teachers; to enact the Safe School Act, etc.¹

For the purposes of the work and previous presentation, we should present some understandings of possible definitions: What is a safe school? A safe school is a school in which the overall safety school climate enables the safety of life and property for students, teachers, other school staff, parents and visitors, to peacefully enjoy their rights to education, to communicate in a way that reflects the educational mission of the school. In recent times, at the beginning of the third millennium, scientists and researchers usually accept a slightly different approach to defining a safe school. Safe school models do not only rely on physical safety, but a safe school includes more than just physical safety, because it implies the protection of emotional and intellectual safety at the same time [24; 33], where student expectations are clearly articulated through the four principles of a safe school: "consistent, fair, applied and coercive" [30, p. 157] and requires the development of "scientific, professional and applied abilities from multiple fields of knowledge, to be able to understand and understand why some people would be so happy to kill us?" [51], because "ignorance in a safe school makes it difficult to make sense of the function to protect students, school staff and the school, keeping us in a sense of powerlessness and a sense of personal insecurity"[27].

Some authors go further and to the question, what are the best strategies for promoting Safe Schools today, they indicate: "in many schools, students and staff wear

identification badges, security officers or police patrol the school environment, corridors and restrict access to the school, staff are trained for security procedures, visitors are checked in after showing photo identification, and a Security Code of Conduct governs all interactions" [39]. Going further than the above, it is considered that "in order to be emotionally and intellectually safe, the school must go beyond the obvious check of physical security, to create a sense of shared responsibility for security" [2; 43], so therefore, he indicated that "increased cooperation of students, teachers, community and security authorities is necessary to build the principle: a common language of school security management" [45, p. 61].

7. Conclusion

After the unfortunate event that happened in the "Vladislav Ribnikar" elementary school, the professional public was divided. Were we surprised by the mass murder of children at school? It is. Everything was happening somewhere... in someone else's yard. And then it came to us. The research showed that in the Republic of Serbia there is no: Safe School Law as an umbrella framework and basis for building the "Safe School" model, the Republic of Serbia did not adopt and pass in the National Assembly the Declaration on the Safety of Students, Teachers, Professors and School Staff in the School Environment, in the Republic of Serbia there is no prescribed and adopted Code of Safety for students, teachers, parents and others in the community related to school and education, the Republic of Serbia does not have a "National Center for the Safety of Students, Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff and Schools", the Republic of Serbia does not have at the lower levels of the community — the levels of cities and local co-governments to the "Office for School Safety", and because of this lack there are no "School Safety Auditors", who would issue a document confirming that the school has the necessary elements that make it safe.

At the beginning of 2001, the concept of building a "Safe School" model was launched in the Republic of Serbia, but it was not recognized by politicians and other persons who have decision-making power, so it stopped

¹ The Declaration on Safe Schools of the Republic of Serbia should unequivocally express and direct the future obligations of everyone in the security chain when it comes to building the "Safe Schools" model. The declaration should reflect not only a political commitment to the protection of students and teachers in the school, and the school itself, but to ensure the building of obligations for those who will be responsible for the safety of the school. It should clearly state that the right to education without fear of violence or attack is a priority of the state. Every teacher, professor should teach and research in conditions of safety and dignity. Every school should be a protected space for students to learn and fulfill their potential.

developing and providing the possibility of preventing unpleasant events. The attack-mass murder of students in the “Vladislav Ribnikar” elementary school is not a “black swan-statistically inevitable inevitability”, but a deficiency in the mechanism of the security system in the Republic of Serbia. An analysis of attacks in schools around the world shows that before a criminal attack on students in a school was carried out, several indicators were always visible that indicated that an attack would happen: Those responsible did not know how to recognize them. A lack of knowledge in the field of scanning and recognition of phenomena from the environment that would enable the activation of early warning mechanisms was observed.

The results of the research show that for the establishment, development and duration of the “Safe School” model, physical security measures performed by the police are not sufficient, regardless of the fact that they can and do affect the safety climate among students. This approach in many attacks, although it existed as a measure present in the physical security of many schools, did not prevent mass murders. The security policy and security system currently present in Serbia are conceptually, scientifically and professionally

defective when it comes to the safety of children at school and safety in Serbia. The ability of the current model of the security system in Serbia to deal with crimes committed in schools is at a memorial level. The security system in Serbia understands and observes the security of schools as: the physical work of policemen in the model of guards.

For the development of efficient and effective security of students, teachers and other personnel and the school, a multifunctional scientific approach is needed, as shown by the research results, with priorities of prevention, prediction, proactivity and application of knowledge from the science of security analysis.

Our recommendation is that the Republic of Serbia should establish a National Center for School Safety that will develop an education and training program that would focus on several components: safety in schools and the law, culture and diversity of young people, prevention of school crime and non-incriminated deviant behavior, safe school planning, problem solving, prevention of school crises. Together these elements would provide the link for a comprehensive school safety leadership program, and as the research suggests, a voice of reason from scientific and professional knowledge is needed with a mix of ongoing research in the field of school safety.

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jasmina Igrački

PhD, Doctor of Law, research associate at the Institute for Criminological and Sociological Research.
Belgrade, Serbia.
jasminaigracki@yahoo.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0533-9033>

Tatjana Z. Skakavac

PhD, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Legal and Business Studies, Dr. Lazar Vrkatić University.
Belgrade, Serbia.
tatjana.skakavac@gmail.com

Dragan A. Manojlović

Prof., Dr., Full Professor at the Faculty of Legal and Business Studies, Dr. Lazar Vrkatić University.

Belgrade, Serbia.
detore1914@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6120-0220>

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CONTRIBUTION OF THE AUTHORS

The contribution of the authors is equivalent.

ИНФОРМАЦИЯ ОБ АВТОРАХ

Жасмина Играчки

Доктор права, научный сотрудник, Институт криминологических и социологических исследований.
Белград, Республика Сербия.
jasminaigracki@yahoo.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0533-9033>.

Татьяна З. Скакавац

Доцент факультета права и бизнеса, Университет им. доктора Лазаря Вркатица.
Белград, Республика Сербия
tatjana.skakavac@gmail.com

Драган А. Манойлович

Доктор права, профессор, действительный профессор факультета права и бизнеса, Университет им. доктора Лазаря Вркатица.
Белград, Республика Сербия
detore1914@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6120-0220>

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