

## SECURITY VERSUS SACRIFICE: STRIKING A BALANCE IN THE PURSUIT OF VALUES

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### ABSTRACT

*The pursuit of security is an inherent and fundamental human drive that is firmly rooted in our nature. Individuals and civilisations have consistently protected themselves from potential threats and hazards. Throughout history, the pursuit of security has played a significant role in shaping human actions and policies, ranging from ancient tribes securing their settlements to contemporary states making substantial investments in defensive systems. Nevertheless, amid this unwavering endeavour, an essential enquiry emerges: To what degree does the pursuit of security result in relinquishing other values? Is there a need to find a balance between different factors or perspectives? The intricate interaction between security and various societal ideals necessitates meticulous examination. On one side, it is apparent that pursuing security often requires compromising some values.*

**KEYWORDS:** Human Drive, Threats and Hazards, Pursuit of Security, Defensive System.

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### Introduction

Governments may restrict civil liberties to uphold law and order in times of crisis or conflict. Surveillance measures are justified on the grounds of national security, which may have the unintended consequence of infringing upon the rights to individual privacy.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, economic resources are reallocated towards defence expenditures, reducing funding for social welfare initiatives and infrastructure projects. However, it is essential to note that an exclusive focus on security without considering other values can create different challenges. The proliferation of monitoring measures has the potential to engender a sense of mistrust among individuals within a society and undermine the fundamental tenets of democracy. The failure to prioritise social welfare programmes has the potential to sustain and exacerbate societal inequality, compromising the system's overall stability and sustainability. Therefore, achieving a careful equilibrium between pursuing security and preserving fundamental societal values is crucial.<sup>2</sup>

The central argument presented in this essay posits that pursuing security frequently requires relinquishing other principles. However, achieving a reasonable equilibrium that safeguards the collective welfare and cohesion of individuals and society is possible. This argument demonstrates an awareness of the potential consequences of an excessive emphasis on security, which may result in neglecting essential ethical considerations. However, it also recognises that disregarding safety would leave us vulnerable to avoidable risks.<sup>3</sup>

### The Sacrifice of Personal Freedoms

#### Examples of security measures that infringe on personal freedoms (e.g., surveillance, restrictions on privacy)

Since the end of the Cold War era, new global challenges have emerged that pose threats to both international security. These challenges include terrorism and transnational organized crime. The effectiveness of addressing these threats is a topic of debate. Following the events of September 11th

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attacks, in particular several Western governments including the European Union, have adopted strategies that prioritise surveillance-oriented security technologies (SOSTs) to combat terrorism and criminal activities proactively (Rasmussen, 2006; Grevi et al., 2009).

The use of these technologies, aimed at bolstering security has resulted in increased surveillance, which has encroached upon individuals privacy and limited their liberties.

A discussion has arisen regarding the impact of Security Oriented Surveillance Technologies (SOSTs), on security and privacy. The relationship between privacy and security is often viewed as a trade off, where the implementation of SOSTs reduces privacy but enhances security. This trade off concept is crucial for comparing countries and studying how individual traits influence opinions (Bowyer, 2004; Davis & Silver 2004; Strickland & Hunt 2005; Riley, 2007).

However, the trade off approach sparks controversy. Dourish and Anderson (2006) argue that privacy and security are frequently portrayed as notions without acknowledging their emergence from the interactions between individuals and their social and institutional environments. The trade off model presents security and personal freedom as options thereby framing public resistance as merely sacrificing for national security (Monahan, 2006; Tsoukala, 2006). Alternative perspectives on emerging security policies centered around Security Enhancing Technologies (SOSTs) have been marginalized in discussions, on security.

These viewpoints bring up worries regarding the authoritarian elements of these policies well as the potential dangers of expanding functions commercializing data and social discrimination (Spence, 2005; Amooore, 2006; Liberatore, 2007; Lodge, 2007b; Côté Boucher, 2008).<sup>6</sup>

#### **Potential Negative Consequences of Sacrificing Personal Freedoms for Security**

Policymakers frequently face the challenge of balancing the potential negative consequences of limiting individual freedoms with the potential risks associated with lax security measures. Implementing mandatory evacuations or shelter-in-place orders during natural disasters can effectively preserve lives, albeit at the expense of personal freedom. Regulation in financial markets safeguards participants while limiting their freedom of choice. Seat-belt laws, smoking bans, and prescription drug regulations serve to protect individuals by imposing restrictions on their actions.<sup>7</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic is not an anomaly. Policymakers have predominantly relied on encouraging or enforcing behavioural changes among citizens to protect public health during the pandemic. Despite the prevalence of vaccines, various factors such as vaccine hesitancy, logistical difficulties, the emergence of new virus variants, and other barriers will require the continued implementation of nonmedical interventions as essential public health measures. Governments globally have enforced restrictions on personal freedoms in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The measures encompass quarantines, lockdowns, immigration and travel restrictions, mandatory mask-wearing, curfews, social distancing rules, limitations on mass gatherings, and other comparable actions (Cheng et al., 2020). Kucharski et al. (2020) found that implementing restrictive policies can effectively reduce virus transmission. It is essential to recognise that these policies can have notable psychological consequences. These consequences may endanger individuals' well-being and result in noncompliance with recommended behaviours, ultimately endangering their health and the health of others. The user's text is already short and does not require any further rewriting.<sup>8</sup>

Security-enhancing behavioural interventions can be influenced by various factors such as hurricanes, financial markets, driver safety, and global pandemics, which often limit personal liberties. Psychology aids policymakers in comprehending the negative consequences of reduced freedom, particularly on individuals' well-being, and facilitates the development of strategies to mitigate these effects. This article explores the trade-off between policymaking freedom and security, utilising psychological science and related subjects.<sup>9</sup>

Smoking and terrorist attacks are examples of contexts we use. We also focus on the COVID-19 context. Doing so serves two purposes. Psychology can illuminate coronavirus issues. Once the global epidemic ends, COVID-19 may become endemic. New variations may develop, and pandemics may occur more often (Dobson et al., 2020; Gibb, 2020; Smith, 2014). Understanding the psychological dimensions of freedom in public health policy can inform present and future pandemic responses.<sup>10</sup>

The pandemic also illustrates our overall concept of the psychological dynamics of balancing freedom and security in crises and disasters. Numerous studies on the epidemic have illuminated the trade-offs between security and freedom and how policies affect billions of people. According to studies,

countries' virus control abilities vary. For instance, countries like the US, which value individual freedom, have needed help managing the virus than those that value collectivism and stricter social standards (Gelfand et al., 2021). When freedom is cherished, people may oppose sensible and practical limits during crises and calamities. Our analyses and recommendations are relevant to individualistic cultures. Policymakers in other locations may benefit from contemplating and investigating freedom-security trade-offs since limiting freedom can harm well-being and conduct in many civilisations.<sup>11</sup>

### **Striking a Balance Between Freedom and Security**

Psychology can explain unpleasant, uncooperative, and reactive attitudes to curtailed freedom during crises and disasters as the costly reaction to policymakers adjusting the freedom-security calculation. It is unsafe to offer significant freedom while maintaining security. We must give up some freedom for security. The trade-off seems uncontroversial because it makes people safer and briefly restricts freedom. Not everyone makes freedom–security trade-offs like utility-maximizing agents choosing the safest alternative. According to judgement and decision-making theories, freedom–security trade-offs can be critical issues that generate this imbalance.<sup>12</sup>

Freedom is a moral and religious virtue, making the freedom–security trade-off problematic (perhaps more so in increasingly individualistic and flexible cultural contexts, which we examine later in this study; Gelfand, 2018; Markus & Schwartz, 2010; Schwartz, 2000). Freedom inspires creativity and productivity (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and promotes well-being, a core goal of the UN's sustainable development goals (United Nations, 2015). Many moralise freedom. Thus, restricting freedom denies citizens a fundamental right, and protests are a response to politicians.<sup>13</sup>

Daily struggles with self-control and impatience show the present loss against future gain trade-off's difficulty. Future rewards, especially abstract ones like a lower but nonzero COVID-19 risk, are underestimated. Temporal discounting—discounting future gains—occurs in judgement and decision-making despite smaller current gains. Thus, people prefer chocolate bars over vegetable sticks, click the snooze button to sleep ten more minutes than a leisurely ride to work, and watch TV instead of studying for a test. Impatient people will bear pain for future profit because of the present. The mismatch of rewards and losses and a present bias in intertemporal decisions make freedom feel more valuable than security.

Finally, balancing freedom and security may become difficult as the status quo changes. According to research, people prefer the status quo (Zeckhauser & Samuelson, 1988). When disasters and crises disrupt freedom and security, the prior status quo may predict unfavourable reactions to new restraints. The US prepandemic status quo valued freedom in all ways—no masks, many self-expression alternatives, and few travel limitations (Markus & Schwartz, 2010; Schwartz, 2000). Before COVID-19, Asian countries used masks more, explaining the prepandemic status quo. South Koreans wore masks for medical and cosmetic reasons (Wong, 2020).<sup>14</sup>

The status quo is crucial. Thus, a mask requirement may disrupt the freedom–security balance more in nations where it deviates more from daily life (e.g., the US) but less in countries where people are more used to them. People with various status quo reference points may react differently to freedom limits even within the same culture. Flyers notice air travel constraints more than first-timers. Policymakers must study new constraints' contexts.<sup>15</sup>

### **Security and Civil Liberty**

Early in "Two Treatises of Government," John Locke defines the state of nature as freedom and equality. Self-preservation and retaliation against threats to life or well-being are natural rights<sup>14</sup>. Individuals utilise their rights within natural law, which prohibits harming others. Locke believed this position of freedom was not unrestricted. Hobbes' state of nature does not necessarily imply continual battle, but it is also not stable enough for perfect happiness<sup>15</sup>. Individuals' failure to meet their commitments might cause problems at the Statue of Liberty. An impartial judge who can understand the law and mediate conflict is necessary to avoid war. To maintain stability and security, a government must enforce the law<sup>16</sup>. Locke describes the motivations for abandoning nature for political society as the "mutual preservation of their lives, liberties, and estates," or "property".<sup>16</sup>

Famous Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment philosophers argued that individual liberty is necessary for national security. Rousseau's "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains," does not advocate a lawless nature. He proposes voluntary public participation in politics.<sup>17</sup> Like Hobbes' Leviathan, European constitutional history has upheld the State's sole right to employ force to defend

security and the rule of law. This persists despite the emphasis on individual autonomy. Rousseau believed the public should regulate violence. The state can only intervene in an individual's freedom and personal development to prevent a threat to order or a violation of others' rights.<sup>18</sup>

The constitutions of famous liberal democracies strengthened liberty in the 20th century.<sup>19</sup> Articles 1 and 2 of the German Basic Law provide that humans are constitutional subjects. Individual liberty is vital for the constitutional system since autonomous humans are its lawful subjects.<sup>20</sup>

Constitutional liberty protection protects individual rights and promotes democracy by creating a free community. It encourages democratic participation and personal growth, creating a diverse and inclusive society. The Constitution's goal is to safeguard human individuality, not only autonomy. Individual freedom is fundamental for democracy. Additionally, it must provide constitutional legitimacy.<sup>21</sup>

This historical analysis shows how liberalism developed and how liberty is necessary for security. Meanwhile, some argue that personal independence requires a certain level of protection and safety.<sup>22</sup>

### Conclusion

In essence, the act of prioritising security necessitates decision-making and sacrificing significant aspects. The essay discusses the difficulty of balancing security with other societal values. Various aspects of this issue have been examined. The excessive emphasis on security can have negative implications for civil liberties, privacy rights, and individual freedoms. Investing in security may impede advancements in education, healthcare, and social welfare. It is crucial to recognise the impossibility of achieving security. As societal changes occur and novel challenges emerge, it becomes evident that achieving a state of equilibrium may only be partially feasible. The current endeavour aims to strike a balance between prioritising safety and maintaining our principles.

It is important to assess the impact of sacrificing certain values for increased security measures. It is crucial to engage in discussions regarding national defence strategies and policies for public safety. Understanding the interconnectedness of various societal aspects is crucial as we strive to maintain security while upholding our principles.

To enhance national security solutions, it is imperative to adopt a multidimensional approach by engaging experts from diverse fields, beyond the conventional defence sectors. Achieving a harmonious equilibrium between security objectives and the preservation of societal values necessitates ongoing scrutiny and flexible policy development capable of accommodating evolving circumstances. This intricate task necessitates dialogues among policymakers, facilitators, and citizens to protect our welfare while upholding personal liberties in contemporary societies. This will ultimately facilitate coexistence.

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