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Tamed Tiger?

The New Notion of National Security and Liberal Democracy

Submitted in February 2000 by Katharina C. Pichler in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Coursework Masters Degree in Politics from the University of Cape Town, South Africa.
With thanks to my parents, David, Sascha, Markus, Vero and Jasmine for their support, and to Prof. Annette Seegers for excellent supervision and pillars stony and otherwise.
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INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores how the political discourse of 'national security' can be used to legitimise illiberal and anti-democratic processes. Surveying past experiences with this discourse both in South Africa and abroad, it warns against the trend of embracing a reformed notion of 'national security'. It suggests, more particularly, that this adoption is inappropriate in a newly established liberal democracy like South Africa.

1. Legitimacy and Legitimation

As Max Weber recognised, “the state is a relation of men dominating men... If the state is to exist, the dominated must obey the authority claimed by the powers that be”\(^1\). Legitimacy is a means of securing this obedience. At its core is a normative consensus among the dominated that the state has a right to demand and, if necessary, exact their obedience. “To ask whether a political system is legitimate or not is to ask whether the state or government is entitled to be obeyed” (Robertson 1993, 241). Since recognition of this entitlement imposes a personal obligation of obedience among individual citizens, “the behavioural manifestation of legitimacy is the compliance of citizens with the directives of the regime” (Gurr 1974, 185).

How legitimacy is acquired remains controversial. Weber identifies three basic “legitimations of domination”: tradition, charisma, and legality. Tradition is “the authority of the ‘eternal’ yesterday, i.e. of the mores sanctified through the unimaginably ancient recognition and habitual orientation to conform”\(^2\). Legitimation through charisma, by contrast, rests on “the extraordinary and personal gift of grace”\(^3\) of a particular leader: citizens obey their government because they revere it as divinely inspired or personally heroic. Legal-rational authority, finally, rests neither on custom nor on personality, but on “an impersonal bond to the generally defined and functional... official duty [which is] fixed by rationally established norms”\(^4\). Citizens obey because they assent to an impersonal norm and perceive the commands of the power-holder as rationally established within the structures of that norm: “orders are given in the name of the impersonal norm... and even the giving of a command constitutes obedience toward a norm rather than an arbitrary freedom, favor, or privilege”\(^5\). This notion of legitimation echoes the Social Contract tradition’s conceptualisation of political obligation: individuals consent to a community in return for the benefits that communal life brings, but in doing so they incur duties as well as rights. In consenting to membership in the community they endorse the norms of that community and consent to be bound by its laws.

For Weber, legal-rational authority is the foundation of the modern state. This position has been subject to attack, however. Echoing Locke’s argument against Hobbes that people cannot rationally consent to

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1 M. Weber, “Politics as a Vocation” in (Gerth and Wright Mills 1958, 78)
2 Ibid, pp. 78-79
3 Ibid, p. 79
5 Ibid, pp. 294-295
subjugation, critics like Dogan have argued that legal-rational legitimacy is operative only in pluralist democracies. Although modern autocracies may enjoy legitimacy, according to Dogan, their mode of legitimation is not legal-rationalism. Marxists have extended the logic of this critique further to include even modern democracies. Habermas, for example, maintains that “because the reproduction of class societies is based on the privileged appropriation of socially produced wealth, all such societies must resolve the problem of distributing the social surplus inequitably and yet legitimately” (Habermas 1975, 96). Because the norm of class inequality cannot be rationally consented to by all, the bourgeois order must seek to maintain its legitimacy through ideology and indoctrination.

While the class analysis on which this argument is based is contentious, Habermas’s insistence on the dynamic character of legitimacy is valuable. Legitimacy must not only be acquired but also maintained. No regime can take popular support for granted – and indeed Gurr suggests that “if a highly legitimate regime acts in ways which are inconsistent with the expectations on which its legitimacy is based, it may run a greater risk of political violence... than a regime that has persistently lacked popular support” (Gurr 1974, 187). Any regime’s legitimacy is subject to re-evaluation in light of the policies it pursues and laws it promulgate. However, governments are not passive subjects of public scrutiny. Whether or not they are Gramscian ideologists, they are certainly opinion-shapers: using their authority, their access to the media, and sometimes simple propaganda, they can – and do – promote acceptance of their policies and laws among the public. They justify their actions as either beneficial or necessary, or both. In short, they try to ‘sell’ their policies to the public as legitimate. In this process, they derive a crucial additional degree of freedom from the fact that the ‘social contract’ is not in fact a legal document. Instead, the term denotes a shared understanding within a polity about the limits and norms of acceptable political behaviour in general and about the proper relation between the state and its citizens in particular. Crucially, this understanding is constantly evolving, adapting to new challenges, aspirations, and changes in popular norms. Some of its elements may be enshrined in legal documents like the state’s constitution, but even these documents are subject to alteration if the polity’s political norms change: constitutions have historically been altered, abrogated, or ignored with genuine popular assent. Thus not only can governments promote their policies by arguing that they are in accord with the existing social contract, they can also seek to reinterpret this contract and thus affect what the prevailing norms are. In the process, they legitimise both the policies and, by extension, themselves.

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*Specifically, Locke argued that to believe that people would surrender all rights of disobedience to the Leviathan in order to escape the state of nature “is to think that men are so foolish that they take care to avoid what Mischief may be done them by Pale-Cats, or Foxes, but are content. may think it Safety, to be devoured by Lions.” (Held 1996, 78). *
*See M. Dogan. “Conceptions of Legitimacy” in (Hawkesworth 1992, 178).*
*While in 1973 Habermas argued that this could only be a temporary measure to defer the “legitimation crisis” of the bourgeois state, he later developed more sophisticated theories of how legitimacy could be maintained over time.*
2. Liberal Democracy and National Security

It is worth noting that all regimes face the challenge of legitimation to some extent. Since even the most authoritarian regimes rely to some extent on the acquiescence of the population they govern, they too will seek, in various ways, to promote acceptance of an evolving social contract justifying their rule. This thesis, however, focuses primarily on legitimation within liberal democracies, and it investigates only one particular instrument of legitimation, namely the discourse of national security.

A liberal democracy is a complex political system in which free and equal citizens, subject to the rule of law but guaranteed human and political rights, regularly elect their own government and thus hold their rulers accountable. In order to protect citizens from the encroachment of the state, liberal democrats also advocate the separation of powers, a limited state, and the subordination of the military to the legislature. Liberal democrats defend this system as embodying the core values of individualism, liberty, and equality. Liberal democracy can thus be distinguished from both autocracy and social democracy. Autocracies embody fundamentally different values, emphasising hierarchy and obedience instead of equality and freedom. Their political structure thus differs from the liberal democratic ideal type in fundamental ways: rulers are not elected and are accountable neither to their subjects nor to the law, while citizens are not recognised as holding rights against the state.

By contrast, the opposition between liberal and social democracies does not reside in the values they endorse but in the manner in which they seek to promote these values. Social democrats endorse democratic procedures, rights, and the rule of law to enshrine liberty, but also view equality as a challenge that necessitates state intervention. They argue that formal equality cannot guarantee true equality, echoing John S. Mill's famous criticism that "The law, in its majesty, forbids rich and poor alike to sleep under bridges". For social democrats, only resolute state-led wealth redistribution and positive discrimination in favour of disadvantaged members of society can promote true equality among citizens. Liberal democrats, by contrast, shy away from endorsing such state activism. They fear the state as a possible menace to liberty and therefore seek to minimise its power and constrain its intervention in society as far as possible. They fear that positing substantive aims for the state will give it license to curtail individual freedom. Liberal democrats therefore endorse only procedural ways of promoting equality, emphasising equality of rights and opportunities over equality of means and welfare. Thus while social democrats alloy their commitment to democratic procedures with an endorsement of substantive ends, liberal democracy remains an essentially procedural form of democracy.

However, as the opposition with social democracy shows, liberal democracy is vulnerable to the charge that its procedural focus hampers the pursuit of important substantive ends. This vulnerability can be exploited by rulers seeking to legitimise illiberal and anti-democratic policies within a liberal democracy. In this context, the discourse of national security is powerful and therefore interesting. Security is a fundamental good for every polity, and invoking 'national security' appeals to one of the most basic duties of citizens
under any social contract: the defence of the polity they have formed. This defence may, however, be argued
to require alterations in the existing contract. In particular, a greater concentration of power within the
government may seem necessary to counter the perceived menace, which necessarily implies the
empowerment of the state vis-à-vis its citizens. This empowerment undermines liberal democracy. However,
if citizens feel threatened, they may be willing to exchange the privileges they enjoy under Locke’s more
liberal social contract for the greater security that Hobbes’s Leviathan seems to offer. Invoking ‘national
security’ is therefore one of the most powerful means of provoking a renegotiation of the terms of the liberal
democratic social contract in a polity. Policies that run counter to liberal democratic tenets can thus be
legitimised.

3. The Structure of this Thesis

South Africa has embraced a national security discourse less than five years after committing itself to
liberal democracy. If this discourse can serve to justify a more authoritarian redefinition of the existing social
contract, this is a legitimate cause for concern among those who believe in the moral value of South Africa’s
new liberal democratic system. My contention is that it does have this potential. Both in South Africa and
elsewhere, the discourse of national security has in the past been invoked to abridge the democratic process
and violate individuals’ rights, and although the particular discourse now advocated in South Africa differs
substantially from those adopted in the past, it can be expected to have similar legitimising effects.

Chapter 1 reviews some essential tenets of the liberal democratic tradition, including the notion of
individual rights, the separation of powers as a deliberate policy to restrain state power, and civil supremacy
over the military. It thus sets the standards against which to measure the possible implications of adopting a
national security discourse.

Chapter 2 is devoted to the notion of national security. The idea of national security was developed in the
USA after World War II and in response to the pressures of the incipient Cold War, and in its original
version it closely reflected both the lessons US policy-makers had drawn from recent history and the security
environment they perceived around them. The notion has evolved significantly since its conception. Under
the pressures of the globalising Cold War, it was adopted in the Southern hemisphere, notably in Latin
America, where it was adapted to local threat perceptions by stressing an internalised rather than external
threat to national security. Nevertheless, both the Latin American and the US/Western version of the notion
of national security still shared the emphasis on the Cold War as basic determinant of threat. Since late the
1980s, however, the notion of national security has undergone a second, more profound, change: first a group
of Southern scholars and then, after the end of the Cold War, virtually all Western thinkers abandoned the
Cold War framework for thinking about national security. They became proponents of a New Notion of
National Security (NNS), which sought to harness the discourse of national security towards mitigating
social problems like underdevelopment, crime, pollution, and disease. Stressing transnational threats in the West and national menaces in the South, the NNS has become dominant in the contemporary world.

Chapter 2 chronicles this evolution. It also critically examines past experience with the Old Notion of National Security (ONS). The chapter highlights both the theoretical critiques that were made of the notion in the West and in Latin America and the practical consequences of its adoption in each region, which included legitimation of executive and military empowerment and of the abuse of individuals’ rights. The chapter thus underlines the tensions that have historically existed between the discourse of national security and liberal democracy.

Chapter 3 offers a case study of South Africa. It contains two sections. The first describes South Africa’s experience with the ONS. In the late 1970s and the 1980s, South Africa adopted an increasingly internalised Old Notion of National Security, called first Total Onslaught Theory and then Revolutionary Onslaught Theory. The adoption of these discourses coincided with and legitimised the concentration of executive discretionary power, military empowerment, and an increasing tendency for the state to violate individuals’ rights. South Africa’s experience thus mirrors the experiences described in Chapter 2. The second section explores South Africa’s present experiment with the NNS. It charts the rise of this discourse first within the African National Congress (ANC) and then within the South African body politic more generally, and describes some of the core themes it now incorporates: underdevelopment, crime, and illegal immigration. It also establishes that the notion now dominant in South Africa is essentially a Southern one, stressing national rather than transnational threats and solutions.

Chapter 4 explores whether the NNS is safer for liberal democracies than the ONS. Can past abridgements of the liberal democratic process like executive discretion and military empowerment be legitimised under the NNS as well? Can the violation of individual rights legitimised under the ONS also be justified with reference to the NNS? The chapter tackles these two questions in two separate sections. Within each of these, the argument proceeds in a similar fashion: first, history’s lessons are reviewed to reveal the roots of the danger to liberal democracy in the past. Then, the most convincing arguments for why these processes of legitimation cannot occur under the NNS are reviewed. Finally, a critique of these arguments is offered: each of the claims made by the NNS’s proponents that the notion of national security has become harmless to liberal democracies is refuted. The chapter concludes that legitimation of abridgements of liberal democracy remains possible under the NNS.

Finally, the Conclusion summarises the main points of the argument and offers a theoretical analysis of why the NNS’s redefinition of the content of ‘national security’ has failed to guarantee a change in the notion’s legitimising effect. It argues that the discourse of national security is inherently antagonistic to the principles of liberal democracy, because it emphasises goal-orientation where liberal democracy defends procedure over outcomes, and because it focuses on a collective body where liberal democracy enshrines the individual as ultimate unit of moral value. Thus even the profound changes to the notion of ‘national
security' advocated by proponents of the NNS cannot eliminate the notion's potential for legitimising policies that run counter to liberal democracy. Employing any national security discourse can help promote an evolution away from liberal democracy, in which a divided civilian state operates primarily to preserve the rights its individual members, towards a more authoritarian one in which power is concentrated and unaccountable, and which serves to protect an abstract collective at the expense of individual rights. The thesis ends by commenting on the implications of this argument for South Africa, arguing that the adoption of the NNS places an additional – and unnecessary – burden on the country’s nascent liberal democracy.
CHAPTER 1: 
NECESSARY ELEMENTS OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

The subject of liberal democracy is vast and complex, and no exhaustive account can be provided here. Rather than construct an ideal type, this chapter proposes on a minimal definition of the basic necessary elements of liberal democracy.

I propose to focus first on the fundamental principles of modern liberal democracy, which include individualism, liberty, and equality. Although each of these concepts has its own autonomous history and genealogy, I will discuss only the contribution they make to liberal democratic theory. This approach also explains the order in which I present them. Although both liberty and equality are ancient concepts that arguably antedate individualism, liberal democratic thought was impossible before the ascendancy of individualism, and therefore my discussion begins with this concept. Similarly, although the concept of equality may not be younger than that of liberty, its full endorsement by the liberal democratic tradition occurred after that of the concept of liberty and is therefore discussed last.

The second part of this chapter investigates the political and institutional structures which form the bedrock of a liberal democratic state. These structures embody and seek to enact liberal democracy's theoretical principles, in particular by safeguarding individual liberty and equality from encroachment by the state. Although they may not constitute sufficient conditions for liberal democracy, these elements are necessary characteristics in absence of which no political system can be deemed liberal democratic.

1.1. Fundamental Principles of Liberal Democracy

This section identifies the set of theoretical core principles which the liberal democratic system is designed to embody and enact. Liberal democracy is rooted in a philosophical vision of humanity affirming the notions of individualism, liberty, and equality. These ideas form the theoretical basis of all more concrete propositions of how a liberal democratic community should be structured.

1.1.1. Individualism

At the heart of liberal democratic theory is an assertion of the human individual as most important unit of both politics and ethics. Individualism is the Archimedean point from which liberal democracy is constructed. It is both essential to the tradition - “Without individualism, there can be no liberalism.” (Bobbio

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9 See, for example, Orlando Patterson's *Freedom* (Basic Books, New York, 1991), on the genealogy of the concept of liberty.
- and uniquely characteristic of it: neither the ancient democracies nor historic or contemporary non-liberal regimes asserted the primacy of the individual.10

The roots of liberal individualism can be traced to the vision of the individual introduced by the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century. Prior to the Reformation, the predominant worldview was communitarian. The social group predominated over and eclipsed the individual. Not only were a person's position and prospects largely determined by his/her birth into a particular (divinely ordained) social rank, but identification was also primarily by group-membership - by trade, estate, and/or geographical unit. By contrast,

"The teachings of Luther and Calvin contained at their heart an unsettling conception of the person as 'an individual'. In the new doctrines, the individual was conceived as alone before God, the sovereign judge of all conduct and directly responsible for the interpretation and enactment of God's will. This was a notion with profound and dramatic consequences. ... [it] helped stimulate the notion of the individual agent as 'master of his destiny', the centrepiece of much later political reflection." (Held 1996, 72-73)

The Reformation thus challenged both social classification into groups, by imagining each person as an individual, and social hierarchy, by postulating each individual as equally capable of understanding divine commands. Modern liberalism inherited this notion of the individual as having a certain intrinsic and autonomous worth. Although liberal democracy can still conceive of groups, it only imagines them as groups of individuals: the individual retains his/her separate and autonomous existence within the whole.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) further advanced individualism by divorcing the notion of the individual's intrinsic worth from religious conceptions of his relationship to God. Kant proposed that the "rational being himself must be made the grounds for all maxims of action" because through reason we transcend the deterministic realm of nature to become subjects capable of autonomy as participants in the realm of pure practical reason (Sandel 1992, 16-18). Contemporary liberals retain his notion of the individual as having moral value by virtue of his/her very humanity as characterised by rationality (the capacity to reflect), which extends into autonomy (the ability to act independently and deliberately). "The liberal individual is an active being, who finds satisfaction in the seeking and striving that constitute activity as we humans conceive it" (Gauthier 1992, 153), and it is through reason that humans are able to choose their activity. They make these choices according to an evolving conception of what constitutes a 'good life' for them, which they arrive at by reasoning about their interests and making value-judgements. This process may be influenced by their social surroundings, but individual rationality prevents complete social determination of conceptions of the good: "That conception need not rest on purely asocial motivation, for the liberal individual is not an asocial

10 Both Plato and Aristotle assert the primacy of the polis over the individual, monarchies and authoritarian regimes tend to place the life, wealth, and honour of the ruler above the welfare of the individual, and in totalitarian regimes Volk or class were given pre-eminence above individual life and happiness.
being. But the goods of different individuals reflect both harmonies and conflicts of interest” (Gauthier 1992, 154)

Thus the individual stands at the heart of liberal democratic theory, and it is the individual that liberal democracies seek to empower and protect. In a liberal democracy, therefore, the individual provides the standard against which political value judgements are made: a political arrangement is praiseworthy if it respects the individual, and reprehensible if it harms him/her.

1.1.2. Liberty

Liberal democratic theory’s focus on the rational, autonomous individual leads logically to a preoccupation with that individual’s freedom. If the individual is valued, that which allows him/her to express her individualism must also be valued. Liberty, for liberal democrats, is the preservation of the fundamental human capacity for independent action in the absence of which the individual cannot exercise his/her humanity. “In the end... the reasons for respecting moral autonomy sift down to one’s beliefs that it is a quality without which human beings cease to be fully human and in the total absence of which they would not be human at all.” (Dahl 1989, 91).

This respect for individuals’ freedom inspired the quintessentially liberal notion of individuals’ rights. The notion originated with John Locke’s (1632-1704) concept of natural rights, which he defined as grounded in “…that equal Right that every Man hath, to his Natural Freedom, without being subjected to the Will or Authority of any other Man.” (Dahl 1989, 85). For Locke, however, the ultimate foundation of these rights was a divine dispensation granting each man his liberty. In contemporary liberalism, by contrast, the concept has largely been secularised, and individuals’ rights are generally viewed as grounded simply on respect for the individual’s humanity - hence the notion of human rights. These rights can neither be renounced by the individual nor abrogated by others. They cannot be legitimately transgressed.

The content and scope of individuals’ rights remains disputed, however. At the heart of this controversy is the question of how an individual’s liberty should be conceived, and in particular which enabling conditions are necessary for individual freedom. Participants in this debate tend to agree that liberty requires at minimum freedom from external constraints. Berlin calls this negative liberty: “Political freedom in this sense is simply the area within which a man can act unobstructed by others” (Berlin 1991, 34). The question, however, is whether this negative freedom from external constraints is a sufficient as well as a necessary condition of freedom. This is denied by at least two major schools of thought. First, Marxists and many socialists maintain that freedom requires a minimal material basis. In a capitalist system, they argue, a person’s liberty may be severely restricted by poverty. Without the necessary financial resources, for example, a person cannot choose where to live or what to eat, much less benefit from any formal freedom to

11 The question of how much autonomy the individual has in elaborating his/her conception of the good remains controversial.
travel. Thus true freedom can only be safeguarded if a certain minimum level of resources – food, shelter, and income – are guaranteed. This school of thought is vehemently opposed by more conservative thinkers, who argue that unless poverty is imposed on some individuals by others through discrimination, slavery, or serfdom, lack of resources, however deplorable, does not infringe liberty. Second, proponents of ‘positive liberty’ maintain that psychological empowerment is necessary for ‘true freedom’: “one is free only to the extent that one has effectively determined oneself and the shape of one’s life” (Taylor 1991, 143). On this view, a person whose reason is obscured or obstructed by compulsive desires or ‘irrational’ fears is in a very important sense unfree. Adversaries of ‘positive liberty’, however, reject the notion as a “specious disguise for brutal tyranny” (Berlin 1991, 43). They hold that defining liberty as “the condition in which a person’s life is governed by rational desires as opposed to desires that he just as a matter of fact has” (Miller 1991) provides an excuse for obstructing others’ actions as evincing from actual rather than ‘rational’ desires.

These debates continue to divide liberal democrats. Not all agree, for example, that the problem of positive liberty is best addressed by “cut[ting] all the nonsense off at the start by declaring all self-realization views to be metaphysical hog-wash” (Taylor 1991, 145). However, liberal democrats remain united on some core tenets. They agree that liberty is a critical human and social good that should be safeguarded through the recognition of individuals’ rights. They accept that freedom must include negative liberty, although they disagree on what else it might include. Thus, at a minimum, they will defend such basic rights as the right to life and bodily integrity or freedom of movement and speech, and view attempts to obstruct individuals’ freedom of action with suspicion.

1.1.3. Equality

The third core principle of liberal democracy is equality. Despite the obvious diversity of character and talents among individuals, liberal democrats assert that human beings are fundamentally equal. Like individualism, this idea has religious origins: early Christianity, later revived by Luther and Calvin, emphasised the equality of all individuals in the eyes of God. Liberal democrats, however, have tended to ground their belief in human equality in claims about human nature rather than religion. One tradition has emphasised the natural passions of human beings. Hobbes, for example, argues that all humans share a common fear of death. Thus in the state of nature, each seeks to preserve himself, if necessary at the expense of others (Hobbes, 1985). A second tradition, spearheaded by Kant, argues from rationality. This tradition recognises that the capacity for rational thought, for which the human individual is to be valued, inheres equally in all human beings, although it may be differentially developed through education or intelligence.

However, and is a central issue in the ongoing liberal/communitarian debate. See (Avineri and de Shalit, 1992)

12 This gives rise to endorsement of so-called “second generation” social and economic rights which are to supplement the political and legal rights which in a democracy safeguard negative liberty.

13 Libertarian like Nozick even argue that redistribution of wealth infringes the liberty of those who have fairly and legitimately acquired it. (Nozick 1974)

14 See section on individualism above.
Thus even "in the incurable psychotic there runs a current of human life, where the definition of 'human'... relates to the specifically human capacities... he has feelings [and dreams and fantasies] that only a human being, a language-using animal, can have" (Taylor 1992, 33-34).

Both of these traditions share the assertion that human beings are fundamentally alike in their most basic core. They deduce that every individual has a right to be treated with equal consideration and, conversely, that no one individual is intrinsically superior to others and hence worthy of special respect.

Although the idea of intrinsic equality has recently been qualified as "an assumption so fundamental that it is presupposed in most moral arguments" (Dahl 1989, 84-85), however, equality is in many ways the most recent and least explored tenet of modern liberal democratic theory. This ideal "may be four hundred years old, but it is only within the last forty years, since [the inclusion of women and the propertyless into the polity and] the civic emancipation of non-white peoples, that we have actually begun the experiment in earnest - establishing a polity based on equal rights with the full incorporation of all available human differences" (Ignatieff 1997, 69).

Contemporary liberals are only just beginning to grapple with the panoply of practical issues raised by the intriguing but ultimately very vague notion of intrinsic human equality. One seemingly intractable issue is economic equality: contemporary liberals disagree strongly about what kind of distributive justice intrinsic equality entitles human beings to. More theoretical consensus is apparent, however, on the question of how intrinsic equality should be given expression in social reality:

"Individualistic political theorists hold that each individual is worthy of respect, of dignity; democratic political theorists hold that they are equally entitled to respectful and dignified treatment." (Pennock 1983, 3). Contemporary liberal democrats acknowledge that although people are intrinsically equal by virtue of their shared humanity, they also differ in fundamental ways, including in their conceptions of the good. The liberal democratic way of honouring equality in these circumstances is to respect difference. Liberal democrats maintain that people with differing conceptions of the good are equally entitled not only to respect for their human rights, but also to at least minimal respect for their way of life, i.e. to tolerance. Liberal democrats need not be amoral or indifferent between various conceptions of the good (indeed they are expected to choose their own personal conceptions), but they must accept disagreement on these value-judgements. This reflects not only the possibility that their own evaluation may be flawed, but also the fact that as liberal democrats they are bound to respect others’ autonomy even when they disapprove of how this autonomy is used. Thus while Dahl and Mill argue for tolerance from the standpoint that there are no moral experts. Dworkin and Rawls argue, in addition, for ‘dignified treatment’ of those with other conceptions of

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15 The question is addressed in different ways in Rawls’s difference principle and Dworkin’s insurance scheme, for example (Kymlicka 1990).

16 Dahl defends “The Presumption Of Personal Autonomy: In the absence of a compelling showing to the contrary everyone should be assumed to be the best judge of his or her own good or interests.” (Dahl 1989, 100); Mill famously challenges the certainty of our moral principles in his ‘argument from skepticism’ (Barber 1995, 691)
the good even from hypothetical moral experts. For them, respect for the autonomous individual involves according him/her the right to make his/her own mistakes. Not only may different conceptions of the good be equally ‘correct’, but they are also expressions of the very quality liberals revere in humanity. Equal respect for each individual’s rational capacity to choose a conception of the good logically demands tolerance for the different conceptions of the good they espouse.

Thus although they may differ about whether the source of human equality lies in human passions or rationality, liberal democrats agree that humans are alike in fundamental ways, and that they are therefore entitled to equal consideration by others. This is held to imply a need for both formal non-discrimination within a society and tolerance for individuals’ varying conceptions of the good.

Thus individualism, liberty, and equality are the fundamental principles that liberal democrats are committed to respect. These principles express themselves in liberal democrats’ general affirmation of individuals’ rights and in their commitment to tolerance of competing conceptions of the good life. They also have more specifically political repercussions in that they lead liberal democrats to endorse a particular view of what the state should do and how it should be structured, to which we now turn.

1.2. The State in a Liberal Democracy

Liberal democracy is not simply an ideology: it also designates a political system designed to actualise and embody its core values. “It is the task of liberal democratic systems to combine liberty with equality” (Sartori 1962, 368). Liberal democratic states are thus bound to respect the rights of their citizens and to treat them equally. However liberal democrats do not view the state as a positive instrument in the pursuit of these ends. Instead, they distrust the state, perceiving it primarily as a potential menace to individuals. Thus the liberal democratic tradition deals with the state less by injunctions of how state power should be used than through a series of prescriptions specifying how political power should be distributed within a polity and a set of rules about what kind of laws should be promulgated. These include stipulations about the how individuals may gain access to state power, restrictions on the nature of laws and the scope of state activities and prescriptions on how state power should be divided and how the military might of the state should be controlled. This section will consider each of these in turn.

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17 See (Rawls 1971) and (Dworkin 1977)
1.2.1. The Electoral Process

In a liberal democracy, all citizens must be allowed to participate in the formulation of the laws they live under. Citizen participation has traditionally been defended by appeal to liberty, and Kant was merely restating an Aristotelian principle when he asserted that freedom involved living under laws of one's own choosing. From Aristotle to Kant and beyond Kant into the 20th century, however, philosophers were concerned with the liberty of only a section of the national population. Even when early liberal ideas of representative democracy and individual liberty gathered momentum and currency from the seventeenth century onwards,

"who exactly was to count as a legitimate participant... remained unclear or unsettled... It was left by and large to the extensive and often violently suppressed struggles of working-class and feminist activists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to accomplish a genuinely universal suffrage in some countries... Through these struggles, the idea that the rights of citizenship should apply equally to all adults slowly became established. ... It was only with the actual achievement of citizenship for all adult men and women that liberal democracy took its distinctly contemporary form" (Held 1996, 118-119).

The modern liberal democrat combines respect for liberty with a commitment to equality, and therefore champions the participation of all adult citizens in the legislative process. Dahl, for example, links his "presumption of individual autonomy" (i.e. the idea that, absent compelling evidence to the contrary, everyone should be assumed to be the best judge of his/her own interests and thus allowed to act as he/she feels fit) with the notion of intrinsic equality to derive an obligation for universal participation:

"If the good or interests of everyone should be weighed equally, and if each adult person is in general the best judge of his or her good or interests, then every adult member of an association is sufficiently well qualified, taken all around, to participate in making binding collective decisions that affect his or her good or interests, that is, to be a full citizen of the demos... [Therefore,] when binding decisions are made, the claims of each citizen as to the laws, rules, policies, etc. to be adopted must be counted as valid and equally valid." (Dahl 1989, 100-105).

Given the size of modern polities, however, most modern liberal democrats accept that direct participation by all citizens according to the ancient Greek or the Rousseauian model is no longer practically possible. Modern liberal democracies are thus representative rather than participatory, and "choosing and rejecting representatives is, indeed, the central act of participation by the citizens in a mass democracy, from which any effectiveness that they might have in other respects derives" (Steinvorth 1996, 141). In representative democracies, citizens voluntarily and temporarily delegate the power to legislate in their name to a set of individuals chosen through an electoral process. This process is thus not only a method of choice

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18 For Aristotle's view, see (Aristotle 1996) and (Mulgan 1977). Kant defines freedom as following one's own laws both in practical political terms in "On the Common Saying: 'This May be True in Theory but it does not apply in Practice'" (Kant 1991) and more metaphysically in Foundations for the Metaphysics of Morals, edited by L. W. Black (MacMillan, New York, 1985).

19 Even New Zealand, one of the least populous modern democratic countries, has a population 100 times the size of that of fifth century Athens (Dahl 1982, 8).
but also an expression of consent: citizens accept to be ruled by those they elect. "Democracy... is
government by people whom the people elect and thereby authorize to govern them" (Steinvorth 1996, 140).

In a modern liberal democracy, only electoral victory can empower an individual to legislate for the
polity and validate claims to legitimate exercise of state power. The electoral process is therefore at the
centre of liberal democratic practice. However, not every casting of votes gives individuals the opportunity to
freely and equally elect their legitimate representatives. A number of conditions must therefore be placed on
the electoral process in a liberal democracy:

First, the electoral process must be open to all adult citizens, and elections must be regular, free, and
competitive. Through their vote, citizens empower others to rule for them, but they do not abdicate their
sovereignty to their representatives. Regular elections are necessary to provide citizens the opportunity to
renew, alter, or revoke the consensual contract they made with their rulers, thereby confirming the latter as
their legitimate representative and (temporary) rulers. This can only happen in free and fair elections.
However, if citizens vote under coercion, or if only one candidate or party is allowed to stand for election,
citizens' votes will reflect neither their choice nor their consent, and the winner of the elections thus has no
legitimate title to rule. "Voting without free choice cannot result in representative government, and becomes
nothing more than the people's periodic renunciation of their sovereignty" (Sartori 1962, 24).

Second, the conditions must exist for elections to be effectively as well as formally competitive. "Voting
is a necessary, but not sufficient condition of democracy. To render them equivalent, voting must be
surrounded by numerous institutions like political parties and free speech, which organise voting into
genuine choice" (Riker 1982, 5). For these institutions to flourish, citizens must be free to organise and
express themselves politically. Liberal democrats often term the requisite liberties 'civil rights', indicating
that they are essential in allowing the individual to act as a citizen and member of civil society. Beyond
rights of political participation such as the right to vote, civil rights enshrine freedom of information on the
one hand and freedom of opposition on the other. Access to information is vital in allowing citizens to make
genuine and informed decisions during elections, and it is guaranteed by such liberties as freedom of speech
and of the press. Freedom of opposition, by contrast, seeks to guarantee that voters face a genuine choice
during polling by allowing both for the articulation and expression of alternatives to government views and
policies and for genuine competition between these various stances for popular support and thus state power.
Civil rights specifically furthering freedom of opposition are the rights of association and assembly, while
opposition parties also rely on freedom of information to disseminate their messages and elicit support. In
addition, liberal democrats insist on a relatively "even playing field" for political contestation, which
essentially entails a ban on the use of state resources to further the electoral campaign of any one party.21

20 L. Diamond, in a presentation to UCT Honours and Master's Seminar, 12/3/1997
21 Some even suggest that, especially when long-term incumbency has made the playing field uneven (e.g. when a single party has
become the chief contractor in an economy, a major dispenser of patronage, or a driving force in public media) state resources and
power should be used to attenuate the effects of such dominance, for example, by stipulating that each contestant be allotted equal
Finally, in a liberal democracy, votes must be treated equally and aggregated fairly. No vote should count for more than any other vote. Neither the electoral procedure nor the interpretation of electoral results must favour the expression of any particular ideological stance or the interests of any particular community. In other words, the interpretation of votes to determine legislative choices must be person- and value-neutral.

"If the premise is that human nature is defined by equality... [human beings] would appear to have an equal right to governance. Among equals, the only suitable form of pre-eminence is numbers" (Barber 1995, 690). Not only must each individual be granted exactly one vote and all votes be counted equally, but the rule for translating votes into political outcomes should be “a purely neutral decision-making procedure, noncommittal about outcomes, [and] compatible with any sort of decision...” (Holmes 1995, 303). This can be achieved by either proportional or majoritarian voting systems, since with both options only the ranking of voter support determines the ranking of parties in power. “The procedural rule best suited to the working of a democracy is that the alternatives that are most wanted, that is, most wanted by most people, are those that should be followed.” (Sartori 1962, 103)

Under these conditions, according to liberal democrats, the outcome of the electoral process expresses the preferences of citizens. This method of choosing representatives results in a government that reflects the freedom and equality of the individual citizens of the polity. However, liberal democrats fear that, once elected, these representatives may be tempted to pursue their own goals and cease to be responsive to their electorate. In a liberal democracy, therefore, elected representatives are granted only temporary access to state power. In order to remain in power, they must regularly seek re-election. This provides citizens with the opportunity to cancel, alter, or renew the mandate of their representatives, according not only to their evolving political convictions but also to their evaluation of candidates’ past performance. The fact that representatives require a periodic renewal of their mandate to govern helps prevent liberal democracies from degenerating into “elective despotism” and helps render representatives accountable to their electorate. Thus the freedom and equality of citizens enshrined in the electoral process are perpetuated over time.

Only laws promulgated through the participation of citizens either directly or indirectly through representatives chosen in regular, free, and fully competitive elections according to neutral rules of vote-interpretation are considered legitimate in a liberal democracy. However, while elections are a necessary procedural instrument for liberal democracy, but they alone do not constitute liberal democracy. For liberal democrats, the electoral process is an expression of central values of liberty and equality, not a fundamental
time/space in the national media, by providing a set sum for campaigning to each party and placing a ceiling on private or corporate campaign donations, or by legislating against differential employment or remuneration practices based on party-political affiliation.


To ensure this, voting in liberal democracies is generally anonymous: there is no need for those counting the votes to know who submitted which ballot slip.

Considerable controversy remains among liberal democrats, however, as to whether to favour proportional or majority voting. For a flavour of this debate, see J. D. Barkin, “Elections in Agrarian Societies” Journal of Democracy 6:4 (1995)
good in itself. Liberty and equality thus have priority over the electoral process, and electoral victory therefore does not give representatives unrestricted access to state power or unconditionally entitle them to promulgate laws.

1.2.2. Restrictions on the Nature of Laws

In a liberal democracy, the content of the laws elected representatives may promulgate is restricted. Laws must reflect the principles of liberal democracy, that is, they may not transgress against the equality of citizens and must seek to maximise citizens' liberty subject to the condition of equal liberty for all. Frequently, these fundamental principles are enshrined in a constitution, the supreme law of the land with which all other laws must accord. “The primary function of a liberal constitution... is to put democracy into effect.” (Holmes 1995, 300). Whether or not formally enshrined in a constitution, however, the following must obtain regarding laws in all liberal democracies:

First, laws must apply equally to all citizens, including the legislators, regardless such factors as social position, race, sex, or creed.25 This injunction has two facets. On the one hand, it prohibits discrimination against particular population groups and thus follows directly from the liberal democratic principle of equality. The liberal democratic state must treat its citizens equally, which means that it must abstract from the identity of the agent to judge all actions equally, i.e. according to the same laws. To promote this equality, liberal democrats advocate an independent judicial system administering jurisprudence based on precedence and supported by a universal right to fair trial. On the other hand, the injunction that laws must apply equally to all citizens is aimed at ensuring that the polity's legislators remain subject to the laws they promulgate. The rule of law, in this sense, stipulates that even the most powerful members of a polity must obey the common law. In addition to reaffirming the equality of all citizens, this second aspect of the universal applicability of laws acts as a bulwark for safeguarding liberty in the polity. Legislators are less tempted to pass unduly restrictive legislation if they themselves will be subject to these laws.

Second, laws in a liberal democratic state must respect the individual rights of citizens. These rights comprise, at a minimum, the basic human rights making the positive liberty of the individual possible and the civic rights allowing the individual to participate meaningfully in the electoral process. The latter include the right to free speech and association, freedom of the press and of assembly, and the right to vote and to present oneself for election. According to liberal democrats, laws or interpretations of laws violating these rights are illegitimate. This is a direct enactment in the sphere of practical politics of liberal democrats' principled theoretical commitment to individuals' equality and liberty. The theoretical liberal discourse tends

24 Thomas Jefferson's formula, quoted in (Murphy 1993, 6)
25 Already Aristotle insisted that in a polity “the law ought to be supreme over all [citizens]” (Aristotle 1996, 99). Kant also insisted on this point (Kant 1991, 74-75), as did Rousseau (Bloom 1972, 568). Legal non-discrimination is enshrined in virtually all liberal constitutions of the world, including the South African one.
to centre predominantly on human rights as a safeguard for individual liberty from encroachments by the
state (Bobbio 1990,16). However, individuals’ civil and political rights are equally inviolate. As Lincoln
argued against Douglas, it is illegitimate to promulgate laws which violate the very principles upon which the
polity (and hence the ability to promulgate laws) is based26. In order to ensure that a polity’s laws respect the
individual rights of its citizens, liberal democrats often advocate an independent Supreme Court empowered
to scrutinise the laws passed by the legislature and nullify those that infringe on or violate such rights. The
function of the Court, then, is to evaluate the laws passed by the collective from the point of view of the
individual and thus defend the latter’s rights.

Thus in addition to being promulgated by a democratically elected government, in the liberal democratic
state laws must apply equally to all citizens, bringing even the powerful under the rule of law, and they must
respect the human, civil, and political rights of the polity’s citizens.

1.2.3. The Limited State

The liberal democratic tradition also insists that the scope of the state’s activities should be limited. This
restriction is rooted in liberal democrats’ commitment to individual liberty and their fear of the state as
potential menace to this freedom. Liberals tend to accept that rules are necessary for communal life and that
one of the main functions of the state is to establish order by enforcing these rules, but for them liberty and
equality, not order, is the paramount virtue of a polity. Society — and therefore social order — is a good only
in so far as it allows the autonomous, rational individual to live and flourish27. Therefore, liberal democrats
seek to limit the scope of the ordering state. Locke, for example, envisioned the role of the state as merely
ensuring a more complete observance of the laws of nature than can be expected in the state of nature.

“In relation to Hobbes’s ideas, this was a most significant and radical view. For it helped to
inaugurate one of the most central tenets of modern European liberalism, that is, that government
exists to safeguard the rights and liberties of citizens who are ultimately the best judges of their own
interests; and that accordingly government must be restricted in scope and constrained in practice to
ensure the maximum possible freedom for every citizen.” (Held 1996, 81)

Liberal democrats view the curtailment of individual liberty as a necessary evil of community life
that must be strictly circumscribed. For them, the only purpose that justifies the state’s infringing on the
liberty of an individual is the protection of the equal liberty of other citizens. Hence the scope of state
action must be limited to those spheres where individual liberties may conflict. This idea finds its most
explicit articulation in J.S. Mill: “the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or
collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number is self-protection...the only

27 Note that Rousseau rejects ‘sophisticated’ society precisely because he believes it debases virtue and corrupts people: “Behold
how luxury, licentiousness, and slavery have in all periods been punishment for the arrogant attempts we have made to emerge from
the happy ignorance in which eternal wisdom has placed us” (“Discourse on the Sciences and Arts” in (Rousseau 1964, 46).)
The purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of the civilised community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others.” (J.S. Mill in Held 1996, 101). Mill therefore distinguishes between ‘self-regarding’ and ‘other-regarding’ activities, arguing that the former are not the proper object of state legislation: “Over himself, over his own body and his own mind, the individual is sovereign.” (Held 1996, 101). Furthermore, even among other-regarding activities, the state has a mandate to intervene only against those which harm or threaten to harm the other. All other issues, for Mill, belong to the individual’s private sphere, in which activity is not subject to legislation and state action is precluded.

This notion of a “private sphere” has recently met contention from feminism on the one hand and through the development of the welfare state on the other. Nevertheless, the essential idea that the state has only a limited sphere of legitimate action has remained central to liberal democratic thought. It has led to the formulation of what might be called private rights (as distinguished from basic human rights) which include freedom of conscience, the right to privacy, and the right to express one’s sexual orientation and which the citizen claims specifically from the state. “Once liberty has been defined as liberty from the state - then the formation of the state can be seen as coinciding with the gradual expansion of the sphere in which the individual is free from interference by the public powers” (Bobbio 1990, 16).

1.2.4. The Separation of Powers

Despite formal structures such as regular free, fair, and competitive elections to ensure the accountability of representatives, constraints on the nature of the laws representatives can promulgate, and restrictions of the scope of the state’s activities, liberal democrats remain wary of the state. “One of the central fears of democracy is that he who delegates his power can also lose it. ... Elections and representation are necessary instruments of democracy, but they are also its Achilles’ heel” (Sartori 1962, 24-25). Liberal democrats realise that the accountability gained from limiting representatives’ terms in office is limited. Although regular elections are not frequent: electoral mandates span several years, which significantly insulates representatives from public pressure. There are advantages to this insulation, but it also provides representatives the opportunity to abuse or misuse their power. Punitive procedures such as impeachment may help deter such abuses, but they tend to involve a dauntingly complicated process, and are thus blunt.

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1 Many feminists, like K. Mollen and L. Evans, argue that power relations are so pervasive in our society that ‘the personal is political’. The rise of the welfare state has drawn the state into more aspects of citizens’ private lives, notably through economic intervention and the ensuing questioning of citizens’ ways of leading their (economic) lives.

2 “One of the functions of representation - and one of its advantages over direct democracy - is that it gives political leaders the distance from immediate public pressures that is needed if they are to act in a consistent and prudent fashion, after weighing all the consequences of action in the balance.” (Birch 1993. 77).
instruments for ensuring accountability. In addition, the informational costs attached to detecting abuses of power by representatives are relatively high. Formally, government business in liberal democracies must be conducted under conditions of transparency, but in practice representatives are protected from scrutiny by the complexity of the issues they deal with and the intricacy of the system in which they operate. “Principal have a hard time monitoring their agents for the same reason that they need an agent in the first place: the time, skills, and organizational resources at their disposal do not allow them to do the job themselves” (Holmes 1995, 300). Under these conditions, representatives may be tempted to abuse their power, exceed their mandates, and flaunt the restrictions placed on both the permitted scope of their activities and the nature of the laws they may promulgate. They may, for example, pass progressively more intrusive legislation aimed at a particular minority population.

To insure the polity against such usurpation of power by elected officials, liberal democrats advocate the separation of state powers. The function of this arrangement is to weaken the government and prevent it from turning against its citizens. The strategy was first elaborated by Montesquieu, who argued that “all would be lost if the same man or the same body of principal men... exercised these three powers: that of making laws, that of executing public resolutions, and that of judging the crimes or disputes of individuals” (Montesquieu, 1997, 157). He thus proposed not only to separate these powers but also pit them against each other in order to create a system in which each body of officials has a vested interest in constraining the others. His notion was subsequently enthusiastically endorsed and developed by the American Constitutionalists.

“The great significance of Montesquieu’s political writings lies in his thesis that in a world in which individual are ambitious and place their own interests above all others, institutions must be created which can convert such ambition into good and effective government” (Held 1996, 87), and The Federalist echoes this endeavour. Rejecting a complete separation of powers as “parchment barriers”, Madison argued in Essay 51 for an overlap of powers between separate bodies, both creating competition among them and giving each effective power to impede the actions of the other (Wolfe 1995, 1121). The separation of powers works precisely because separate agents belonging to and dependent on different bodies are preoccupied with similar issues, but from different vantage points. Both for personal aggrandisement and for reasons of institutional loyalty captured in the adage ‘where you stand depends on where you sit’, these agents act as

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30 Although contemporary examples of impeachment attempts at the highest level of state exist, impeachment is rarely attempted and even less frequently successful. President de Mello was impeached in 1992, but President Clinton weathered an impeachment attempt in 1999, and President Yeltsin has to date survived two.

31 “institutions and the people who work for them have to show what they are doing and explain why” (Seegers 1997, 2)

32 A complimentary strategy liberal democrats also advocate is employing multiple agents outside the state, e.g. an independent media (which has a vested interest in exposing government misdemeanors to attract readership) and non-governmental organisations specialising in the monitoring of the government’s use of power (among them various human rights organisations like Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch). A vibrant civil society and a free and ideologically diverse press are important means of holding government officials of all political persuasions accountable to the public. However, they can only pressure governments indirectly through appeal to public opinion. The separation of power provides for agents capable of acting within the state to restrict the actions of individual officials or government bodies.
invigilators of each other’s actions. The beneficiary of this mutual surveillance is the citizen, whose representation is thus ensured and whose freedom is safeguarded from encroachment by the state.

Crucially, then, the separation of powers at various levels provides a system in which “ambition [is] made to counteract ambition. The interest of the man [is] connected with the constitutional rights of the place”, so that ultimately we have “a policy of supplying, by opposite and rival interests, the defect of better motives” which may be feared to otherwise lead representatives to abuse or misuse their powers (Montesquieu 1997, Book II). It is worth stressing that to procure this security, liberal democrats are willing to weaken and divide their state, trading off efficiency of decision making for assurances that those making the decisions cannot tyrannise those who elected them.

1.2.5. Control of the Military

The separation of powers acts as a crucial buttress for liberal democracy, but liberal democrats still fear that the whole carefully constructed system could be overthrown through the use of force. Even more than an external enemy, they fear the internal threat posed by a polity’s own national armed forces. The monopolisation of the means of violence, and its concentration in a national military, is a hallmark of the modern state (Tilly 1990), but it also represents a dual threat to liberal democracy. First, this concentrated capacity for violence can destroy as well as protect civilian regimes. One central fear for liberal democrats is therefore that the military might replace the elected representatives who legitimately hold power (Seegers 1999, 3). Second, the state’s near monopoly on the means of violence may permit those in power to emancipate themselves from the constraints which liberal democratic systems impose upon them. Thus liberal democrats also fear collusion between the military and the government against the citizenry (Seegers 1999, 6). Both dangers could, of course, be dispensed with simply by not having an army - Costa Rica, for example, disbanded forces for precisely this reason (Quester 1995, 870). However, armies are symbols of prestige, powerful tools for intervention abroad, and bulwarks against foreign attack and domestic threats. National armies exist because countries (including liberal democracies) want to be able to use force to counter threats and impact their international environment. They are likely to continue existing in the foreseeable future. Liberal democrats have therefore concentrated on developing institutional structures that diminish the threat that armies pose to elected governments.

Kant predicted that republics would be more peaceful than monarchies because in a representative system those who bear the costs of war made the decision of whether or not to fight (“To Perpetual Peace” in Kant 1991). He thereby sparked an often heated debate about whether democracies are intrinsically less belligerent. In 1972, Singer and Small presented evidence to the contrary: the democracies in their survey proved equally prone to war as non-democracies – but unlikely to go to war against each other (Singer and Small 1972). Since then, the notion of a peaceful federation of democracies hostile to and prone to war with the non-democracies of the world (already present in Kant) has been revived, notably in (Doyle 1986). Acceptable causes for using military force in democracies may include spreading democracy as well as self-defence.
1.2.5.1. Addressing the Fear of Replacement

In a liberal democracy, the core principle governing civil-military relations is civil supremacy, i.e. the subordination of the military to the legislative, executive, and judicial civil authorities.

"The armed forces should not and cannot be excluded from the discussion of public policy in which they have a reasonable claim to expertise... [but] democracy requires that the armed forces... be subordinated to and governed by elected officials... The chief executive is supposed to make policy, while the bureaucracy - civil and military - is supposed to execute or administer that policy" (Zagorski 1992, 53-4).

As an unelected body, the military may not govern or formulate policy in a liberal democracy. Its very character runs counter to democratic principles: its central values are cohesion, hierarchy, and obedience, not individualism, equality, and liberty. This value-system is critical in allowing it to function: an army is a "purposive instrument... [whose] principal object is to fight and win wars" (Finer 1962, 7), and hierarchy and discipline are necessary in this endeavour. As Seegers remarks, "it is probably unwise to convene a committee meeting if you want soldiers to climb into the mouth of a cannon." (Seegers 1996). However, these values make the military a uniquely inappropriate institution for governing a liberal democracy. Therefore, in a liberal democracy, the task of governing, of formulating policy, and promulgating laws is reserved for elected officials. The military is merely an instrument which these officials may employ and direct. Only when ordered to violate democratic principles or constitutional law does the military have the right - indeed the duty - to refuse obedience (Seegers 1997, 4).

Civil supremacy is thus a basic legal principle of liberal democracy. However, the military's threat to liberal democracy cannot simply be legislated out of existence. The military's near-monopoly on the means of violence effectively empowers it to transgress such laws with impunity. "The normal state of any community should therefore be its domination by the armed forces" (Di Tella 1995, 226). However, although it is impossible to coerce those who monopolise the means of coercion, their obedience to the elected government can be promoted by several measures:

First, commitment to liberal democracy can be fostered within the military. "Covenants without swords being but words, the acquiescence of those who are armed must be ensured in advance" (Welch 1976). This can be achieved by making civic education a mandatory component of military training (Seegers 1999, 5). The military's educational structures provide a channel for spreading liberal democratic principles among soldiers. However, commitment to liberal democratic ideas within the military alone is an excessively tenuous basis for civil supremacy.

Civilian oversight and budgetary control provide for more concrete civilian control over the military. In a liberal democracy, the government interacts regularly with the military to inspect and supervise its activities. It also retains the power to curtail the institution's funding as a means of exacting obedience (Seegers 1999, 4-5).
Third, liberal democrats insist on the territorial and task-specific specialisation of the military: the armed forces should be oriented against external enemies rather than internal threats, and their habitual area of operation should be on or beyond the country's borders. A crucial condition of this specialisation is the creation of an independent police force responsible for maintaining order within the polity using minimal force, a requirement historically predicated on the disarmament of citizens by the state and the civilianising of crime (Tilly 1990, 69-76). This police force relieves the military of its domestic duties, freeing it "to concentrate on external conquest and international war" (Tilly 1990, 76). The resulting tendency towards professional specialisation within the military is reinforced by the increasingly complex nature of international war. It has become

"impossible to be an expert in the management of violence for external defence and at the same time to be skilled in either statecraft or the use of force for the maintenance of internal order. The functions of the officer [have become] distinct from those of the politician and policeman" (Huntington, quoted in Stepan 1973, 49).

Professional specialisation channels the army's destructive potential away from internal politics, and the energies of ambitious soldiers towards expertise in their own particular complex field rather than political power. It thus produces a military disinclined from intervening in domestic politics and therefore more likely to obey their elected government. The military accepts civil supremacy because it has become "politically neutral" (Stepan 1973, 47-49).

Thus the education of soldiers regarding liberal democratic norms, civilian oversight and budgetary control, and the task- and area-specific specialisation of the military help sustain civil supremacy in liberal democracies.

1.2.5.2. Addressing the Fear of Collusion

An alliance with the military would allow elected officials to emancipate themselves from the restrictions placed upon them in liberal democracies and establish a more despotic regime. Liberal democrats propose several measures to reduce the likelihood of such an alliance.

The first involves mobilising the separation of powers to impede the government's capacity to employ the military against its citizens. While the elected head of state is invested with supreme command over the military, thus integrating the democratic government into the military chain of command and cementing civil supremacy, the power to investigate the military's activities, determine its budget, and declare war or a state of emergency rests with the legislature. Thus neither branch has the ability to unilaterally mobilise the military against the civilian population of the polity.
The second measure to minimise chances of collusion between the military and the government is to foster social ties between the military and the general population through broad-based recruitment and representative promotion.

Recruitment has long been recognised as an essential variable determining the loyalty of the army. Thus in 19th century Europe, "the aristocrats supporting the old regime preferred an armed force that would support the king unquestioningly, even if it were called upon to fire on a protesting people. ... The radicals, by contrast, wanted larger armies that, by including all the people, would be more loyal to the people at large." (Quester 1995, 872)

The radicals recognised that recruiting soldiers with ascriptive ties to the larger population would result in an army less likely to obey government orders to harm citizens. This idea also informs many principled proponents of universal conscription, although they also advance arguments from justice (fair sharing of the military burden across all social classes (Quester 1995, 873)) and diminished bellicosity (politicians are less likely to risk troops if their own children are among them). The nadir of differentiation between 'the army' and 'the people' is the "nation-in-arms" (Welch 1976, 12-14), in which universal military training and an extensive reserve system entail a near correspondence between the military and the citizenry. In these cases, the risk of the government being able to ally with the military against the people is minimal.

Promotion may be as important as recruitment, however. Armies whose officer corps is drawn mainly from a particular segment of society are not only prone to internal divisions that may escalate into civil wars, but are also less likely to remain neutral among the various population groups they are theoretically obliged to protect, and therefore more likely to enter into an alliance against particular sections of the citizenry with the government. In liberal democracies, the promotion of senior military officers is recognised to be of political as well as strategic importance: thus in the USA, for example, any appointment above the rank of colonel requires Congressional approval. Such oversight should aim at facilitating the promotion of a group of qualified soldiers broadly representative of the general population.

There are limitations on how closely the military can be linked to civilian society. Even with universal conscription ensuring a representative intake, standing armies differentiate themselves from civilian society over time. "The army differs in function from the society that surrounds it and this function requires that it be separate and segregated" (Finer 1962, 9). Separate barracks, uniforms, special training, and above all a strictly disciplined life within a rigid hierarchy of command tend to alienate soldiers from their societal roots. This effect is reinforced when temporary conscripts return to civilian life and employment, while professional soldiers build a career within the army and dominate the middle and upper echelons of the military. Unlike politicians, officers do not need a popular mandate in liberal democracies, and they are therefore 'representative' only in demographic, not in political terms. A 'representative' military is thus not

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Examples include contemporary Israel and the nineteenth century Zulu state.
automatically a people’s army loyal to the people. It is, however, less likely to ally with the government against popular sovereignty than a non-representative military.

Thus liberal democrats’ two major fears with regard to the military – that it will replace the democratically elected government and that it will collude with the government to oppress the civilian population – can be countered by a variety of institutional measures. Civil education, civilian oversight and budgetary control, and external orientation help mitigate the threat of replacement, while the separation of control over the military among different branches of government and representative recruitment and promotion diminish the danger of collusion. In the absence (or at least very low probability) of violent overthrow, the other structures recommended by liberal democrats can function to produce a system that embodies and safeguards individual liberty and equality. Regular free, fair, and competitive elections present all individuals equally with the opportunity to choose their representatives and hold them accountable. The laws these representatives are permitted to promulgate, however, are restricted. The rule of law confirms the equality of all citizens and promotes liberty by subjecting the legislators to the laws they enact. The requirement that laws must not infringe on citizens’ human or civic rights further advances the cause of freedom. Citizens are protected from the encroachment of the state through the stipulation that it must limit its activities to areas where citizens’ liberties conflict, and by the weakness and internal checks and balances promoted within the state by the separation of powers.

1.3. Conclusion

Liberal democratic theory is founded on the fundamental assertion that the human individual is intrinsically valuable and forms the locus of legitimacy in both politics and ethics. From this tenet, liberal democrats derive a central preoccupation with individual liberty on the one hand and a profound commitment to human equality on the other, which lead them to prescribe respect for individuals rights and tolerance of diverse cognitions of the good life as elemental features of communal life.

These theoretical commitments are translated into concrete stipulations about the political structures of a liberal democratic state. The guiding principle in this translation process is the conviction that the state, far from being an valuable instrument to promote liberal democratic ideals, is in fact one of the most acute dangers to their realisation. Thus for liberal democrats, operationalising individualism, liberty, and equality in the political realm is primarily a matter of determining the means by which they can be safeguarded from encroachment by the state. Regular free, fair, and competitive elections allow citizens to choose their representatives and hold them accountable for the policies they implement, expressing both their equality (no
individual has a right to rule over others) and their liberty (citizens live under laws they help create). The rule of law not only guarantees that citizens are treated equally by the state but also promotes freedom by ensuring that legislators are subject to the laws they promulgate. Liberty is further bolstered by the stipulation that laws may not violate individuals’ human or civic rights, and that the sphere of legitimate state activity is strictly limited. The power of the state over society is curtailed by the separation of its powers. Finally, the entire system is protected against overthrow through military force by preventing both the replacement of elected government by the military and the collusion of this government with the armed forces.

These, then, are some of the elemental ideas and institutional structures liberal democrats are committed to. Together, they form the basis of the ideal type of the liberal democratic system that actual liberal democracies must aspire to emulate. The remainder of this thesis is devoted to investigating whether and to what extent the discourse of national security can be used to legitimise departures from these fundamental requirements of liberal democracy.
CHAPTER 2: FOUR VERSIONS OF NATIONAL SECURITY: EVOLUTION OF A CONTROVERSIAL CONCEPT

This chapter charts the rise and evolution of the notion of national security and reviews the policies it has legitimised in the past.

The national security paradigm was first developed in the late 1940s by US policy makers who sought simultaneously to draw lessons from recent European history and find their bearings in the incipient Cold War. However, 'national security' has proved to be a malleable concept capable of adaptation to various threat and security environments. The original notion underwent its first transformation when the Cold War spread to less developed parts of the globe: in Latin America in particular, a notion of national security emphasising internal subversion rather than international conflict achieved prominence. An even more profound alteration, however, was the abandonment of the primacy of the Cold War framework in assessing threats to national security, which generated the New Notion of National Security (NNS), which has come to dominate the contemporary debate. Within the NNS, a Southern version emphasising internal threats to popular safety as primary national security concerns can be distinguished from a Western one stressing transnational threats.

This chapter describes first the two versions of the Old Notion of National Security (ONS) and then the two variants of the NNS. It also highlights the theoretical critiques levelled against each version of the ONS and the adverse legitimising effects each had in practice. Both versions will be seen to have facilitated illiberal and anti-democratic processes: the Western version favoured the concentration of state power in the executive and the violation of civic rights, while the Latin American one legitimised, in addition, the empowerment of the military and infringement of human rights. The chapter thus prepares the ground for investigating the compatibility of the new notion of national security with liberal democracy.

2.1. The Old Notion Of National Security

This section traces the evolution of the two principal versions of the ONS and provides a critical appraisal of their impact. Both versions of the ONS are shown to be in potential conflict with some of the necessary elements of liberal democracy identified in the previous chapter.
2.1.1. The Rise of the Old Notion of National Security in the West

The term ‘national security’ arose out of an institutional restructuring of the American armed forces designed to improve co-ordination between its different branches by unifying command through the Joint Chiefs of Staff under a single civilian body, the National Security Council (NSC). In addition to co-ordinating the activities of the US military, the NSC was empowered to advise the Executive on overall defence policy. To these ends, it developed a new paradigm, a notion of national security that drew on the ‘lessons’ of the previous forty years of European history.

2.1.1.1. The Historical Roots of the Notion of National Security

The first step in the development of the notion of national security was the delegitimization of war as a political activity. For centuries, war was perceived as a legitimate and glorious activity of states, and statehood was thought to entail the right to wage war in pursuit of national interests. In 1914-1918, however, the tremendous carnage of the First World War and the stalemate of trench warfare raised questions about both the glory of modern war and its utility as a means of policy. Modern warfare seemed tremendously costly and dangerously inconclusive. The stage was thus set for a revolution in perceptions of war. Although at Versailles in 1918 war was still officially deemed legitimate if aimed at national self-determination, by 1928 sixty-five states signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact renouncing war as a means of diplomacy. Wars fought for reasons other than self-defence were declared illegitimate. From 1928 onwards, states tended to have departments of defence rather than ministries of war, and defence policies rather than war plans.

The contemporary notion of ‘defence’ itself, however, was soon discovered to be seriously deficient. Its fundamental flaw was that it rested on an excessively spatial notion of the state. The state was defined in terms of the territory it occupied and state security was equated with the defence of this territory from invading armies. The means to achieving state security, therefore, was seen to be the deployment of

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35 World War Two had seen an escalation of inter-service rivalry as well as a lack of co-ordination between different branches of the American armed forces. Key to the solution of ‘unification’ was not just contact among these branches through the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but also the fact that the NSC was staffed by civilians, thus avoiding giving pre-eminence to any one branch. The NSC was created in 1947 through the National Security Act (McLaurin 1988, 255-6). See (Yergin 1978, chapter 8) for details about inter-service disputes regarding the unification proposals.

36 This section was inspired by the discussions in Prof. A Seegers’s Graduate Seminar on Conflict in World Politics, held at the University of Cape Town in Autumn 1997.

37 A substantial set of literature detailing the conditions at the front evolved during and immediately after the war, bringing the terror of it home to civilians – see, for example, Wilfred Owen’s poetry. Combined with the tremendous casualty rate, which meant that even the most remote hamlets had war dead to bemoan, this led to a general and unprecedented recoil from war.

38 A principle most famously formulated in US President Wilson’s 14 points. African independence movements, in particular, gained impetus under the dual influence of experience of war in Europe and the rise of national self-determination rhetoric.

39 The degree to which this norm became entrenched – and the credibility it gained as international law – was confirmed when one of the four main charges against Nazi leaders at the Nuremberg trials was the waging of an aggressive war.
numerous well-equipped troops on a country’s borders. The Maginot Line epitomised this notion of state security. The 1940s proved this conceptualisation of state security inadequate in three respects:

First, the notion of an exclusively territorial defence seemed invalidated by the failure of Appeasement in the 1930s. Rather than challenging Nazi Germany’s aggressive expansionism militarily, Britain and France sought to avoid war by tolerating German seizure of third parties’ national territory\(^4\), which after all lay outside their national borders and hence outside their defence perimeter. Instead of bringing Chamberlain’s famous “peace in our time”, however, these tactics simply allowed Hitler to increase Germany’s military strength before the outbreak of World War II in 1939. The lesson policy-makers in the post-war era drew was that Clausewitz was correct in stating that “the aggressor always loves peace” (Quester 1995, 870). “In retrospect, it seemed that each time there was a crisis, the nonaggressor states had passively stepped back, which only further whetted the aggressors’ appetites” (Yergin 1978, 198). Thus conceiving of defence in narrowly territorial terms had proved both ineffective and dangerous. Policy-makers concluded that what other countries do abroad can have vital consequences for the security of one’s own state, which should therefore be conceived of as having security interests outside its borders.

Second, the notion of defence as primarily involving the military protection of the borders of a territorial heartland proved inadequate in the context of the development of airborne weaponry in the early 20\(^\text{th}\) century. Aircraft was first employed for combat purposes in World War I, heralding the end of earth-bound armed conflict and hence the severance of the hitherto close connection between territorial control and national defence. World War II saw this incipient trend develop on a massive scale and at a much higher level of technical and strategic refinement. Both the German Luftwaffe and Allied air forces were used with devastating effect as independent fighting forces and proved capable of penetrating deep into hostile territory. Cross-border offensives such as the German advance into France, the London Blitz, the V2 attacks, the bombing of Dresden, and finally the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki all proved emphatically that a country’s security could no longer be guaranteed by a strong army defending its borders. “While the debate about air power’s relation to other forms of military force went on, no one could deny that it had altered the very nature of war.” (Yergin 1978, 200)

Finally, the nature and objectives of warfare changed radically in the early 20\(^\text{th}\) century. The French Revolution had heralded the age of total war involving entire nations rather than merely national elites and relatively small, often mercenary armed forces\(^\text{41}\), and both the First and the Second World War were ‘total’ in this sense. Civilian populations were called upon to contribute massively to the war effort\(^\text{42}\). But World War One demonstrated the enormous cost of direct confrontation between nations mobilised for total war. Open frontal attacks on the enemy cost thousands of lives and often brought little strategic gain. By contrast.

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\(^4\) Including, most famously, ‘ceding’ Czechoslovakia’s Sudetenland in the Munich Agreement of 1938.

\(^4\) Von Clausewitz perceived this transformation brilliantly in *On War*.

\(^4\) For a depiction of the extent of civilian involvement in the world wars, see Hans J. Morgenthau’s *Politics among Nations* (Knopf, New York, 1972)
surprise manoeuvres and subterfuge could prove remarkably effective, as Lawrence’s incitement of the Arab Bedouin revolt against of the Ottoman Empire demonstrated. The notion of indirect war thus gained currency: wars would no longer be planned simply in terms of frontal manoeuvres. World War II introduced a second major innovation: civilian populations became direct targets for enemy attack. These attacks were made possible by the development of airborne weaponry, against which governments could provide only limited protection. Their rationale was to undermine civilian morale and increase the enemy’s costs of war. The advent of total war made civilian populations important components of the national war effort: “whole societies were at war, not just their armed forces” (Dandeker 1994, 358). Therefore popular morale and commitment thus became critical resources. These could be attacked through enemy war propaganda and subversion, and indeed internal surveillance capacities were expanded during World War II to counteract these measures (Dandeker 1994). They were also subject to military attack: the aim of bombings such as the London Blitz and the attack on Dresden during the Second World War was to undermine popular morale. They did not always prove effective, since many survivors appeared more determined to continue fighting after the attack than before. However, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki seemed to demonstrate that attacks on civilian targets could also raise the enemy’s estimation of the costs of further resistance sufficiently obtain its surrender. Thus the notion that attacks on civilian targets could further national war aims became firmly established in this period.

Recent history thus taught the formulators of the first national security paradigm that the territorial notion of the state and state security was inadequate. Appeasement had shown that security might require protecting one’s security interests and stemming international aggression abroad. Airborne weaponry had rendered boundaries porous: guarding the country’s borders could no longer secure the state or its population. In addition, the nature of warfare had changed, remaining total but becoming more indirect and more likely to target civilian populations for attack. Security was seen to require both intervention beyond the state borders and efforts within one’s own borders to secure the support of one’s population. National security, therefore, could no longer be defined simply in terms of territorial defence. As US Navy Secretary James Forrestal argued to the US Senate in 1945: “Our national security can only be assured by a very broad and comprehensive front... I am using the word ‘security’ here consistently and continuously rather than ‘defense’.” (Yergin 1978, 194). This broadened conception underlies all the national security paradigms examined in this thesis.

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43 One major strategist of indirect war was Liddell Hart, who wrote the British Army’s official Infantry Training manual in 1920. See Liddell Hart, The future of infantry, (Faber & Faber, London, 1933)
2.1.1.2. The Environment Shaping the Original Notion of National Security

The original formulators of the national security paradigm faced a threat environment dominated by the incipient Cold War. They perceived the USA as locked in a deadly ideological war initiated by the Soviet Union in which US national interests, fundamental ideology, and indeed the entire “free world” were at risk. They saw the USSR’s ambitions as global, its methods as ruthless and often insidious. These assumptions shaped the national security paradigm they developed.

2.1.1.2.1. The Cold War

Towards the end and in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, policy-makers in the US viewed the main foreign policy issue as being the management of the realpolitical competition between the USA and the USSR. They defined US national interests abroad in terms of the resources available in other countries, and on this definition, according to Kennan, the USA had national security interests in the USSR, Great Britain, Germany and central Europe, and Japan. Britain was an ally and Japan was under US occupation. The USSR, however, was a major rival to the USA – the only one remaining on the international scene given the decline of the European powers during World War II. In addition, the USSR had its own national security interests in continental Europe and was thus a potential adversary. The key to US national security would thus be to manage competition with the USSR while safeguarding US interests in Europe.

However, the Cold War came increasingly to be seen as an ideological war. In the early 1940s, Roosevelt had proposed managing US-Soviet rivalry by integrating the USSR as one of ‘Four Policemen’ in a post-war settlement (Dallek, 1979). Kennan, however, argued that this proposal would founder because “suspicion in one degree or another is an integral part of [the] Soviet system, and will not yield entirely to any form of rational persuasion or assurance.” Soviet ideology, therefore, would make cooperation difficult. Even Kennan, however, still viewed potential conflict with the USSR as essentially a competition for control of the resources in foreign countries. Although he thought that conflict as unavoidable because of the USSR’s internal ideological structure, he did not perceive it to be about ideology. NSC-68, written in 1949 by Paul Nitze, Kennan’s successor at the NSC, decisively broke with this assumption. Commissioned in the wake of the USSR’s acquisition of nuclear weaponry and Mao’s rise to power in China, the report aimed to provide a “single, comprehensive statement of [US] interests, threats, and feasible responses, to be communicated

44 These, for him, were the regions with “the requisite conditions of climate, of industrial strength, of population and of tradition that would enable people to develop and launch the type of amphibious power which would have to be launched if our national security were seriously affected” (Gaddis 1982, 30)

45 Soviet security concerns in Eastern Europe arose from the historic fact that Russia had thrice faced European invasion - namely during the Napoleonic, the First, and the Second World War.

* Kennan, quoted in (Gaddis 1982, 20)
throughout the bureaucracy” (Gaddis 1982, 90). It affirmed that the USSR was waging an ideological war whose aim was not control of natural resources but the spread of world communism.

The nature of this attack, according to Nitze, was apocalyptic. The Communist USSR was attacking democracy and capitalism in general, and thus threatening the USA’s most fundamental values and principles. The conflict was between freedom and enslavement, and ultimately represented an almost mystical clash of Good vs. Evil. In such a war, there could be no accommodation, only the victory of one side and the destruction of another. This “image of the Soviet Union as a world revolutionary state, denying the possibilities of coexistence, committed to unrelenting ideological warfare, powered by a messianic drive for world mastery… triumphed in American policy circles in the postwar years” (Yergin 1978, 11).

Such an ideological war was necessarily global. Freedom and democracy – and therefore America - could be attacked anywhere in the world. As Nitze put it, for the USSR “everywhere that gives us or others respect for our institutions is a suitable object for attack, [and] it also fits the Kremlin’s design that where, with impunity, we can be insulted and made to suffer indignity, the opportunity shall not be missed.” (Gaddis 1982, 92). In this context, every country, however poor or strategically insignificant, was relevant to US national security. Yergin described this globalism thus: “Virtually every development in the world is perceived to be potentially crucial. An adverse turn of events anywhere endangers the United States” (Yergin 1978, 196). Any anti-Communist regime represented a victory for the US, while the ‘fall’ of any democracy to communism weakened the global cause of freedom and challenged the American prestige. Moreover,

“the perceptions involved were not just those of statesmen customarily charged with making policy; they reflected as well mass opinion, foreign as well as domestic, informed as well as uninformed, rational as well as irrational. Before such an audience even the appearance of a shift in power relationships could have unnerving consequences; judgements based on such traditional criteria as geography, economic capacity, or military potential now had to be balanced against considerations of image, prestige, and credibility. The effect was to vastly increase the number and variety of interests deemed relevant to national security, and to blur distinctions between them.” (Gaddis 1982, 92).

In the context of a Cold War increasingly perceived as mortal combat between two mutually incompatible ideologies and value systems, ‘national security’ acquired a new meaning. “In its Western usage, the term ‘national security’… [came to] reflect the Western response to the fundamental ideological challenge from the Soviet Union to deeply-established principles of Western economic and political organization.” (Buzan 1988, 15). It also developed global proportions. As Dean Acheson put it: “We are children of freedom. We cannot be safe except in an environment of freedom.” (Gaddis 1982, 108). And finally, national security seemed subject to continuous threat: Good and Evil necessarily and inevitably clashed, unable to reach any compromise. Therefore even periods of relaxation of tension were not seen as ‘peace’, but merely as Détente.

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4 For this point I am indebted to Martin Caedal’s lectures on the origins and evolution of the Cold War, held in the Examination Schools of Oxford University, in the Michaelmas terms of 1994 and 1995.
2.1.1.2. Appeal to Non-Conventional Means

The Cold War could not be fought by conventional weapons, for two principal reasons:

First, in a war of ideologies peoples’ support and allegiance are not only important resources (as they are in conventional total wars) but also the object of combat. The persuasive power of an ideology and the efficiency with which it is promoted are thus critical to victory – perhaps more so than military force. Even before the Cold War was seen as a purely ideological war, Kennan had warned that the USSR might seek “conquest by psychological means: the danger [is] that the people of Western Europe and Japan... might become so demoralised by the combined dislocations of war and reconstruction as to make themselves vulnerable... to communist-led coups, or even to communist victories in free elections.” (Gaddis 1982, 35)

The remedy he proposed was indicative of a new kind of ‘warfare’: military force could not counter the spread of communism, but massive economic aid could. This was the rationale behind the Marshall Plan, which proved a considerable success. Based on this example, economic aid continued to be viewed as a major means of ideological warfare as the Cold War developed. It was supplemented by less expensive measures including military aid, propaganda, and displays of one’s own economic and military prowess. Beyond such inducements, sanctions, support for internal opposition groups, encouragement of subversion and sabotage, and covert operations aimed at discrediting the dominant regime were among the tools developed for waging this ideological war in which conventional military means were relatively ineffectual.

Second, the development of nuclear weaponry made conventional warfare unacceptably risky. The USA did not maintain its nuclear monopoly for long: by 1949, the USSR had exploded its first atomic bomb. Thereafter, neither superpower was ever in a position to employ nuclear weapons without fear of retaliation on a massive scale. Instead, both superpowers developed second-strike capabilities engineered to ensure that no pre-emptive strike by the enemy could eliminate their capacity to retaliate. Any nuclear attack, therefore, was guaranteed to bring devastation not only for the victim but also for the perpetrator. Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) thus deterred both superpowers from resorting to nuclear warfare. This logic also affected the superpowers’ readiness to engage each other in conventional warfare, since any confrontation risked escalating into nuclear war and thus mutual devastation. Thus the threat of nuclear escalation diminished the utility of conventional warfare as a means of fighting the Cold War.

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Note, however, that for Kennan, this was a threat only because he feared that such communist victories would give the Soviet Union access to the strategic resources of these countries, whereas subsequently the spread of communism itself came to be perceived as a national security menace.

Instead of engaging in conventional warfare with each other, the superpowers therefore chose to challenge each other by non-conventional means. Treverton identifies three categories of covert action common during the Cold War: propaganda, political action, and paramilitary operations (Treverton 1987, chapter 1). Propaganda operations included both direct persuasion efforts through radio, leaflets, and posters and "black" propaganda, i.e. damaging material disseminated in the name of the adversary. Political action ranged from support for internal opposition groups to influencing elections, seeking to overthrow governments, and assassinating foreign leaders. Among paramilitary operations, Treverton lists operations ranging from paramilitary specialists leading local insurgent forces (e.g. the US 'secret war' in Laos) to more limited 'advisory' interventions and limited supplies of arms and training. None of these operations involved a direct clash of rival superpower armies: even paramilitary interventions were essentially wars by proxy which involved only relatively small contingents of US or Soviet personnel. In addition, they frequently targeted client states in regions of limited strategic relevance, rather than attacking the opponent's vital interest areas. Both these factors limited - and were intended to limit - the risk of nuclear escalation.

Thus partly because the object of war was ideological and partly because of the nuclear balance of terror and the risks of nuclear escalation, the Cold War was waged by propaganda, sabotage, infiltration, and subversion, and involved armed confrontation only by proxy. Warfare became covert and unconventional.

2.1.1.3. Conclusion

The ONS developed in the USA from the late 1940s onwards bore the marks of both contemporary history and the emerging Cold War challenges it was developed to address. It was a defensive notion, but 'defence' included the protection not only of a territory but also of national interests. In the context of an ideological war, these national security interests were believed to include the preservation and propagation of fundamental ideological tenets of freedom, democracy, and capitalism, not only within the USA but at a global level. The war against Communism, however, could not be fought by nuclear or conventional means. Both the ideological character of the objective and the prevailing nuclear balance of terror led both superpowers to engage in indirect and unconventional confrontation. Thus national security gained an increasingly ideological content and was seen as threatened by increasingly covert and insidious means.

2.1.2. Critique of the Old Notion of National Security in the West

In the context of the escalating Cold War, the ONS rapidly became dominant. However, it stood in considerable conflict with liberal democracy. It justified long-term executive empowerment and allowed for
executive discretion because of its inherent ambiguity. It also legitimated oppression, as McCarthyism clearly demonstrated.

2.1.2.1. Executive Empowerment

The importance of decisive, centralised leadership during political emergencies has been recognised for centuries. Recognising that during such emergencies a rapid, unified response may be necessary to ensure the polity’s survival, even democracies provide for the concentration of power in these circumstances. Already the Roman Republic developed the institution of electing a temporary dictator in times of peril. Machiavelli noted this with approval: “republics which, when in imminent danger, have recourse neither to a dictatorship, nor to some form of authority analogous to it, will always be ruined when grave misfortune befalls them” (Machiavelli 1970, 196). Modern political theorists have tended to agree, and most contemporary democratic constitutions provide for some kind of emergency powers to be exercised by the executive in times of national crisis. The rationale behind this empowerment is that moments of crisis require rapid and decisive reaction.

However, in a democracy this concentration of power within the executive may only be temporary. Therefore emergency powers are granted only for a limited period, after which the executive must seek approval for its policies from the electorate or its representatives50. Limiting the duration of emergency powers aims at ensuring the accountability of the executive and thus curbing the abuse of these powers. The implicit assumption behind these temporal limitations, however, is that acute emergencies are generally short. Normal democratic procedures can resume because the most immanent danger has been sufficiently addressed to make executive empowerment less necessary. The Cold War notion of national security challenged this assumption in two ways.

First, it posited an on-going ideological conflict. As Dean Acheson declared in 1947, “the business of dealing with the Russians is a long, long job... There is less and less talk even among silly people about dropping bombs on Moscow. They now see it as a long, long pull, and that it can only be done by the United States pulling itself together” (Yergin 1978, 5). Yergin interprets this statement correctly: “By this, he meant that the country had to become organized for perpetual confrontation and for war” (Yergin 1978, 5). This notion of permanent conflict made it possible to justify a continuous concentration of power within the executive and thus “helped to increase dramatically the power of the Executive branch of the US

50 For example, the USA’s 1973 War Powers Act limits the length of time during which the president may commit troops to battle without congressional approval to maximally ninety days. War Powers Act of 1973, US Public Law 93-148, 93rd Congress, H. J. Res. 542 (November 7, 1973), Section 5 (b)
government, particularly the presidency. For the national security state required, as Charles Bohlen put it in 1948, "a confidence in the Executive where you give human nature in effect a very large blank check." (Yergin 1978, 6).

Second, the ONS placed a premium on secrecy. On the one hand, important elements of the Cold War security arsenal inherently required secrecy. Nuclear second-strike capacities and covert operations, for example, can only be effective if they are cloaked in secrecy. On the other hand, the Cold War notion of national security posited the danger of espionage and infiltration. Not only would open public discussion of security matters provide too much information to Soviet agents, but even members of the legislative branch could not entirely trusted not to leak sensitive material to the enemy. Whole areas of policy making were shielded from public scrutiny by this argument. For example, on nuclear matters, a "nuclear priesthood" (Johansen 1992, 102) developed which had almost complete decision-making autonomy, since "informed policy participation [was] constrained by the need for secrecy" (Segal 1994, 375). Regarding covert operations, a consensus formed that "intelligence is undiscussable in public, and that parliament [should therefore] surrender all its powers in intelligence matters to the executive" (Dandeker 1994, 366-367).

Such secrecy is detrimental to democracy. It "keep[s] the public ignorant of information that it needs to make wise policy choices... [and] limits the ability of people to find out whether their preferences, even when clearly articulated, are being followed." (Johansen 1992, 106). It also obstructs the legislature from holding the executive accountable, thus disrupting the function of the separation of powers. Therefore "as long as the liberal democratic state attempts to function as a national security state, it will not be viable" (Johansen 1992, 114). However, the rhetoric of national security "discouraged many people from believing that democracy should be honoured in the national security field." (Johansen 1992, 107). Even most members of the legislative willingly surrendered their power to scrutinise the executive: classifying issues as matters of national security tended to put them beyond partisan debate. "The adversarial process between political parties, which is considered a hallmark of democracy on domestic questions, simply has not worked on military issues." (Johansen 1992, 102). Secrecy on "security matters" was rarely challenged either by the legislature or by the general public. This effectively allowed the executive formulate policy on these issues free from supervision or democratic constraint.

Thus the ONS justified a long-term concentration of power in the hands of the executive by positing the existence of an enduring danger that could only be countered under the cover of considerable secrecy.

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1 See (Dandeker 1994), (Johansen 1992), and (Segal 1994) on the importance of secrecy during the Cold War and its detrimental effects on liberal democracy.
2.1.2.2. National Security as Ambiguous Symbol

The ONS also allowed the executive to influence which issues would be considered as pertaining to national security. As Arnold Wolfers noted, the progressive divorce of ‘national security’ from territorial defence left the concept dangerously open-ended (Wolfers, 1962).

The ONS emphasised the protection of national interests rather than simply territorial integrity. Which national interests should be included as affecting national security, however, was ambiguous. “The link between national interests and national security is a very complex and ambiguous one… a very wide range of real or alleged national security interests can become, or be made into, issues of national security” (Smoke 1975, 249). This range widens even further when the notion of national security is expanded to include ideological as well as strategic or resource-based interests. The relative importance of strategic interests to national security, for example, is open to justification and argument: the location of sea routes, mineral deposits, or important raw materials can be ascertained relatively objectively. Some regions may be very hard to justify as strategically important in these terms. For example, South Korea in 1948 had few resources and little geo-strategic importance. Kennan, who conceived of US interests in strategic and resource-based terms, did not consider it a priority region for the USA (Gaddis, 1982, 30). Nevertheless, in 1950 the US government successfully justified leading the UN intervention in Korea to its public by claiming the Korea presented a national security interest. This shift was possible because a more ideological definition of interests had been adopted: capitalism and democracy (although South Korea was hardly a paragon of democracy) had to be defended against Communist expansion.

Ideologically based conceptions of national security thus allow for a more extensive definition of the scope of the national security interest. Indeed, as Wolfers realised in 1962, under such an inclusive definition virtually anything could be transformed into a national security issue.

“To suit the context and convenience of the speaker or writer, ‘national security’ can mean many things and can be used to justify many policies. Indeed, until the moment that a military attack on one’s homeland actually begins, ‘national security’ is an abstraction - an idea, a symbol, or feeling. There is no valid way that this complexity can be reduced to any moral, factual, or intellectual simplicity. National security, as Arnold Wolfers put it, is inherently an ‘ambiguous symbol’.” (Smoke 1975, 250).

Wolfers recognised that this gave policy-makers an extraordinary scope for discretion, which could be both dangerous and undemocratic. It allowed the executive to define what national security was and to manipulate the notion’s content. Thus the definition of national interests was always likely to be partisan and reflective of the interests of the politically powerful. Because the notion of ‘national security’ is inherently ambiguous, strong executive action could be legitimised even with regard to matters which did not easily or obviously fall in the category of national security concerns.
Thus the ONS not only helped justify the concentration of power in the hands of the executive but also allowed the executive to manipulate the range of issues on which it could exercise this power with perceived legitimacy.

2.1.2.3. National Security and Oppression

The ONS also created a framework within which extremist and non-democratic domestic policies could be legitimated. The Cold War had global dimensions, but it could also be carried into one’s own home territory - and since it was an ideological war fought under a nuclear balance of terror, this onslaught was likely to be covert. The enemy menaced national security through infiltration and the corruption of one’s citizens. The consequence was a constant fear that the enemy might already be operating in one’s domestic territory, and hence a temptation to adopt aggressive illiberal policies to address this danger. In the US, this fear culminated in the McCarthyism of the early 1950s.

The central vehicle for McCarthyism was the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), which had been founded in 1938 and originally served as a partisan tool for attacking the New Deal and the Democratic government. Under Cold War conditions, however, it gained status as a self-declared national bulwark against Communist infiltration and subversion. The original focus of this attack was the government itself. The HUAC accused Truman administration being infiltrated by Communist elements who had persuaded it to adopt a dangerously ‘soft’ line against the USSR. In particular, the administration’s critics accused it of unnecessarily ‘surrendering’ Poland to the USSR at Yalta (Schrecker 1994, 18). In response, Truman issued Executive Order 9835 in March 1947, “creating a government loyalty program to investigate all two million federal employees... Truman’s order was a watershed event in the development of McCarthyism... a sign to the rest of the country that only eternal vigilance could save the nation from the potential wreckers within its midst.” (Ybarra 1998, 22). Truman’s order violated the privacy of hundreds of thousands of Americans and threatened them with discrimination on account of political opinion.

Nevertheless, HUAC remained critical of the administration’s ‘softness’. It escalated its accusations dramatically after Mao Zedong’s victory in China in 1949, sparking a vehement debate about ‘who lost China?’ and legitimating the persecution of the ‘China hands’ blamed for the ‘loss’.

Concern about Communist influence on foreign policy, however, was gradually superseded by a fear of nuclear espionage, fuelled in 1949 by the Soviet explosion of its first atomic device. In 1945, the Office of Strategic Services discovered “a Soviet espionage network in the U.S. which included American Communists.” (Ybarra 1998, 21). The same year, Elizabeth Bentley voluntarily confessed to working for a Soviet spy ring in Washington. Her declaration implicated Alger Hiss, who was convicted of espionage in

37 See Theodore H. White, In Search of History: a Personal Adventure (Harper & Row, New York, 1978) for a personal account of this persecution written by an affected ‘China hand’.
1950. In 1950, Klaus Fuchs was arrested and confessed to having supplied nuclear information to the USSR during and after the Second World War. His case was followed by the arrests of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg for stealing atomic secrets, their conviction in 1951, and execution in 1953.

These people, McCarthyism held, had betrayed the USA because of their Communist beliefs. How, then, should the USA treat Communists? “Truman and other liberals [had] believed the best answer was to let the FBI monitor the party and prosecute its members if they broke laws against subversion or espionage” (Ybarra 1998, 21). McCarthyism urged a more aggressive stance: the right to freely hold one’s political opinion could not be upheld if this opinion committed one to endanger the security of the USA.

McCarthyism reached its pinnacle in the 1950s with the HUAC’s public inquiries into the political convictions of public figures. Suspected communists, like the Hollywood Ten, were brought to public trial for their political convictions. The Communist party’s leaders were jailed “because they supposedly advocated the violent overthrow of the American government” (Schrecker 1994, 18). Dubbed ‘personal fascism’ because of its probes into, and criminalisation of, people’s personal beliefs and convictions, it represented a grave attack on civil liberties, legitimised with reference to the notion of national security.

Thus McCarthyism invoked the language of national security to justify infractions of individuals’ human and civic rights and violations of their privacy, and the ONS proved able to legitimise these extremist and illiberal policies.

2.1.2.4. Conclusion

The notion of national security developed and adopted in the USA in the late 1940s legitimised several infringements to liberal democracy. First, it justified the long-term concentration of power in the hands of the executive by positing an enduring threat and the need for secrecy to address this danger. Second, it empowered the executive to manipulate the content of ‘national security’ to reflect its own partisan interests. Both of these phenomena strengthened the state vis-à-vis its citizens and allowed it to act more autonomously, thereby repudiating the liberal democratic tradition’s insistence on a relatively weak state. Finally, the ONS legitimised infringements of citizens’ civil rights and of their privacy. Liberal democracy’s insistence on the primacy of individuals’ rights and liberty was thus overruled.

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53 They have been called ‘witch trials’. The atmosphere in which they were conducted is well captured in Arthur Miller’s The Crucible.
2.1.3. The Old Notion of National Security in Latin America: Internalisation

Although the ONS was originally constructed by and for US policy makers, its scope of application soon grew. Under the pressures of the globalising Cold War, the USA's allies in Western Europe and Latin America soon adopted the ONS together with the rhetoric of the Cold War.

In its Latin American formulation, however, the ONS underwent a major change. Latin American countries depicted themselves as the frontline of the Cold War and therefore as immediate subjects of Communist infiltration and subversion. Moreover, unlike in the USA, where the overthrow of domestic capitalist democracy was never seriously feared, in Latin America this threat seemed real and imminent. A cataclysmic event in this development was the Cuban revolution of 1959, “one of those transcendent events that, by their very existence, push back the boundaries of what is considered possible at a given time, in a given place, within a given culture” (Perelli 1993, 30). It was interpreted as both ultimate proof that Communist/Soviet expansionism had reached Latin America and devastating evidence of the power of this challenge.

Crucially, this challenge was perceived to proceed through ideological infiltration and encouragement of armed insurgency among the citizens of the target country. This, too, appeared to have been demonstrated in Cuba: the Soviets had not themselves attacked Cuba - a Cuban had delivered the country into their hands. Thus “after the Cuban revolution... a shift in emphasis to a concern with internal security [occurred which] was reflected in arms sales useful only for counter insurgency and internal repression.” (Egan 1988, 197).

The ONS was thus internalised: the emphasis on defence, the focus on national values, and the perception of an ideological war being waged by non-conventional means remained, but to this was added the belief in an imminent Communist take-over threat operating through the country’s own citizens.

There has been debate on why this notion of national security was adopted in Latin America. Wolpin argues that Latin American national security doctrines emerged solely because of “ideological indoctrination via US military assistance programs” (Fitch 1986, 29). For him, the perception among Latin American policy makers that ‘world communism’ was beginning its attack on ‘western civilisation’ in Latin America was implanted by a USA eager to gain allies and tools in its struggle against the USSR. However, Egan (Egan 1988), Perelli (Perelli 1993), and Valdes (Valdes 1989) persuasively argue that Latin American elites played...

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54 The Cold War, as we have seen, was waged on a global scale. Whether it had initiated this globalisation by seeking to spread ‘world communism’ or merely responded to the US globalised challenge, the USSR accepted that the Cold War was to be waged on a global battlefield. In 1975, for example, Marshall Grechov announced: “At the present stage, the historical function of the Soviet Armed Forces is not restricted merely to their function in defending our motherland and other socialist countries, the Soviet state actively and purposefully opposes the export of counter-revolution and the policy of oppression, supports the national liberation struggles and resolutely resists imperialist aggression in whatever distant region of our planet it may appear.” (Rugumamu 1993, 17).

55 Even at the height of McCarthyism, few Americans believed that the US regime itself would be overthrown by Communism (Schrecker 1994, 18)
a much more active role in importing this notion. Their specific arguments vary\textsuperscript{56}, but they all point out that Latin American elites, increasingly challenged in their traditional power and privileges by rising labour movements, had reasons of their own to adopt the internalised ONS. Most important among them was the fact that it provided them with a tool to 'legitimately' combat their domestic opponents: “The common denominator in states manifesting national securitism is the link between external threat and 'home-grown' movements that reject the internal status quo” (Valdes 1989, 366).

This ability of the elites to formulate 'national security' policy to entrench their own power and obliterate opposition lies at the heart of both the theoretical and the applied critique of the internalised ONS.

2.1.4. Critiques of the Internalised Old Notion of National Security

The 'export' of the old notion of national security to Third World countries has produced a wave of criticism. At the centre of these critiques remains the recognition that the ONS paradigm empowers the state to define what constitutes a national security threat and justifies the elaboration of strategies to eliminate this menace. However, both theory and experience show that this was especially pernicious in a Third World context. At the theoretical level, scholars have highlighted the fact that in many developing countries the state was illegitimate and ruling elites unrepresentative. It is thus to be expected that in these countries ‘national security’ policies will aim almost exclusively at regime security - and an internalised ONS aggravates matters because it potentially justifies seeking regime security at the expense of popular security.

At the practical level, the Latin American experience with the internalised ONS more than validates these fears: the notion was used to justify the perpetration of severe and sustained human rights abuses by the state.

2.1.4.1. The Theoretical Critique: 'National Security' in Undemocratic States

According to Ayoob, the ONS was elaborated for - and implicitly assumes the presence of - a particular kind of state:

“[together with the acceptance, since the seventeenth century, of the nation state as basic unit of politics at the international level, the trend towards] greater identification of individuals with their respective states... helped along tremendously by the increasing correspondence between national and state boundaries and by the increasingly representative character of the governments concerned... laid the foundations of the intellectual tradition in which... the security of individuals and of groups came to be totally subsumed within the category of state security.” (Ayoob 1983, 42)

\textsuperscript{56} Perelli simply “refuses to consider the armed forces... as an armed robot blindly following directives coming from the center of power in Washington, DC.” (Perelli 1993, 27). Egan, by contrast, inverses Wolpin's argument to proposes that “national securitism” was in fact “conceived in the womb of colonial Hispanic America” rather than in the USA (Egan 1988, 190)
Thus we commonly use 'national security' to refer to the security of both the state and the individuals within it, simply assuming the presence of a democratic nation-state in which state and popular security neatly overlap. How accurate this is for the West may be questionable; Ayoob's argument, however, centres on how inaccurate it is in the South, and how this renders the rise of the notion of national security there highly problematic. In many parts of the South, 'identification of individuals with their state' is low. Ruling elites are therefore likely to face a choice between seeking state and regime security and striving for the security of individuals within the state. Given their own close and lucrative association with the state, they are likely to opt for the former, and 'national security' will tend to become a euphemism for state security.

Neglecting popular security in the interest of state security already offends against the liberal democratic principle that the state is essentially a servant to its population. Matters are critically aggravated, however, when popular security is not just neglected but actively sacrificed by the state in the interest of regime security. This is precisely what an internalised notion of national security can serve to legitimise, since it allows internal opposition to be depicted as a national security threat which the government has a right—indeed a duty—to eliminate.

This makes internalised notions of national security particularly convenient for Southern elites. In Southern countries, antagonism between the state and its citizens tends to be much higher than in the West, and state and popular security thus often stand in mutual opposition: "the intensity and saliency of internal threats to state structures and regimes are of a much higher order" (Ayoob 1993, 32). Indeed, this internal menace often dwarfs external threats to state security. Empirically, "despite the rhetoric of many Third World leaders, the sense of insecurity from which these states... suffer emanates to a substantial extent from within their boundaries rather than from outside" (Ayoob 1983, 43). Thus it should come as no surprise if Southern elites seize upon the opportunity offered to them by an internalised notion of national security to eliminate internal opposition to their regimes in the name of 'national security'.

"Since it is these regimes [with narrow support bases], and their bureaucratic and intellectual hangers-on, who define the threats to security of their respective states, it is no wonder that they define it primarily in terms of regime security rather than the security of society as a whole. ... in the case of most Third World states, the core values of the regime - with self-preservation at the core of the core - are often at extreme variance with the core values cherished by large segments of the population over which they rule." (Ayoob 1983, 46).

Ayoob's argument, then, is that merely investigating the political circumstances in many developing countries should warn us that an internalised notion of national security is at least as likely to be used to

57 In the West, although state/society antagonism persists in minor forms, "the components of the state, that is, the idea of the state, its institutional expression and its physical base, [are] accepted as legitimate both domestically and internationally... the domestic institutions of governance [have] established conditions and traditions of long-term stability and predictability..." (Rugumamu 1993, 5).
justify abuse than to be employed as a helpful prism through which governments can elucidate and strive for truly national security.

2.1.4.2. Critique of Results: Military Empowerment and Human Rights Violations in Latin America’s Dirty Wars

The sincerity with which Latin American elites held their national security doctrines is debatable. Although assertions that they acted purely from a sense of threat or purely from class interest both find defenders, the truth may well lie between the two extremes. More important for the present investigation than the sincerity with which it was held, however, was the behaviour that the internalised ONS legitimised.

First, it served to justify the domestic deployment of the military and facilitated legitimisation of military take-overs. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, civilian governments increasingly appealed to national security to justify deploying the military to quell internal disturbances (Perelli 1993), (Saba 1987). This deployment reversed the external orientation of many militaries: by the late 1950s, techniques for quelling internal insurgency had replaced strategies for international warfare on the curricula of Latin American military academies like Brazil’s Escuela Superior de Guerra (ESG) or Peru’s Centro de Altos Estudios Militares (CAEM) (Stepan 1973). Although an internal orientation does not in itself cause military take-overs, it removes what the previous chapter has shown to be an essential safeguard of civil supremacy. Coups did in fact occur in Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, and Peru, amongst others. The internalised ONS, moreover, not only helped create the conditions for these coups but also served as justification for them, since the armies involved claimed that their intervention was prompted by the failure of civilian governments to make substantive head-way against the ‘communist threat’.

“The [internal] sort of national security orientation... presents a concrete problem for civilian control... What should happen if civilian authorities do not understand the nature of the threat? What if incompetent civilian authorities are part of the problem? This integrated approach leaves the door open to the ad hoc assumption of governmental functions by the armed forces. Military involvement... raises the possibility of military subversion of the political process.” (Zagorski 1992, 126-127)

Second, and worse, the internalised ONS served to legitimise the resort to force against civilians and led to human and civic rights abuses on a massive scale: “terror action by the government [was] not even be

58 Egan, for example, argues that “The regimes which came to power in Argentina in the 1920s and 1970s invoked the national security threat... as a cover for an armed attack by the dominant elites against a sector of the population who they considered threatened the system of capitalism itself.” What was supposed to be a Dirty War against a foreign threat was, in reality a class war between capital and its domestic critics.” (Egan 1988, 191)

59 Given the on-going Cold War and considerable internal unrest including left-wing guerrilla movements in Argentina (the Montoneros and the ERP) and Uruguay (the Movimiento de Liberación Nacional-Tupamaros) there may have been some genuine fear of Communist infiltration. On the other hand, using the armed forces against labour fit the class interests of the ruling elites rather too well for the suspicion of class-based war not to arise.

60 In Mexico, for example, the army has long been internally deployed, but there have been no military take-overs since 1920. For an interesting account of why this might be, see (Ackroyd 1991, 86).
considered action against civilian innocents, but appropriate levels of force against combatants" (Lopez 1986, 90). Internalisation set up a domestic enemy. An agency with a near-monopoly of force, specialising in violence, and trained to use maximum force could thus ‘legitimately’ be unleashed against domestic society. Furthermore, because the enemy was assumed to operate through infiltration, civilians became ‘justifiable’ targets of military might. Chilean General Luis Danús explained:

“We are trained to take action against regular forces. In fact, if an adversary is not wearing insignia, is not wearing a uniform, he is regarded as an irregular and can be shot on the spot. The laws of war say so, and the Geneva Convention accepts it. So, these soldiers from outside, these individuals, who are trained in universities or in special groups in the Soviet Union, come to fight against us, and we have to regard them as external enemies. And we can’t be so naive in acting against them as to go around just like the traditional soldiers in the Napoleonic wars.” (Zagorski 1992, 125-126).

However, counterinsurgency was not the sole purpose of military intervention. Under an internalised security doctrine, the target was “subversion, which [meant] anything which, in any way, threatens the ‘Western and Christian way of life’” (Munck 1989, 56). The task set for the military was the restoration of ‘order’, which, divorced from an actual and acute armed threat, could be extended in ever-widening circles. Beyond the elimination of ‘obvious trouble-makers’ such as trade unionists or declared communists, it came to include the cowing and depoliticisation of civil society as a whole. “A meticulously organised and ruthlessly exercised counterrevolutionary ‘dirty war’ was waged [in Argentina, but also elsewhere] on the popular organizations and the popular ‘sea’ in which they swam. ... Society was redefined as a war zone and a discourse of summary justice held sway. There were few rules, and safety could not be guaranteed to the non-combatants” (Munck 1989, 68-69; my emphasis). Widespread torture occurred in Uruguay. In Argentina, thousands disappeared. As General Videla chillingly put it, “In order to achieve peace in Argentina, all the necessary people will die” (Fisher 1989, 18).

Civil society as a whole was penetrated, notably by the development of specialised internal agencies and intelligence services designed to combat the hidden, subversive enemy proposed by the internalised ONS (Munck 1989, 63), (Valdes 1989, 367). The Latin American national security state sought to create a “disciplinary society” which policed itself: “Prisoners in our own country” is a phrase that keeps recurring in the literature of resistance to emerge from the southern cone dictatorships. It marks a brutal shattering of the traditional separation between the public and the private. The all-seeing eye of the state penetrated the deepest recesses of civil society, or at least people believed it did” (Munck 1989, 62).

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61 i.e. to deploy all available means against the enemy to ensure as rapid and as total a defeat as possible
62 30,000 by some estimates (Fisher 1989)
2.1.4.3. Conclusion: The Latin American ONS and Liberal Democracy

If Ayoob demonstrates theoretically that abuse of the internalised notion of national security is to be expected, the Latin American experience resoundingly reinforces this verdict. Both the democratic state and its citizens are threatened by the behaviour that can be – and has been - legitimised with reference to an internalised notion of ‘national security’. The democratic system is at risk from a military encouraged by internal deployment to contemplate taking over power. But whether power remains in military or civilian hands, the more devastating potential effect of an internalised notion of national security is the legitimation of the use of state power (including the use of force) against the citizens of the state. This can result in violations of individuals’ human and civic rights and invasions of their privacy, and thus the end of a consent-based, limited liberal democratic state.

2.1.5. Conclusion

The ONS reflected both the lessons policymakers in the USA in the 1940s drew from contemporary history and the challenges they saw themselves as facing in the context of an escalating Cold War. History taught that a merely territorial definition of security was inadequate; instead, national security had to be conceived of as the defence of national interests abroad and the safeguarding of popular loyalty and support at home. The Cold War, in which the USA came to envision itself as engaged in against a revolutionary state bent on world mastery, helped define national security in increasingly ideological terms and implied that national interests had to be defined on a global scale. Because this ideological war was fought under a nuclear balance of terror, however, the means of warfare could be neither nuclear nor conventional; instead, unconventional, covert confrontation by sabotage, infiltration, subversion, and war by proxy came to be viewed as the dominant mode of conflict. It was against these covert threats that national security would have to be defended.

In the USA, this conception legitimised several infringements of liberal democracy. It justified the prolonged concentration of power in the hands of the executive, allowed policy-makers to manipulate the content of national security to further their partisan interests, and legitimised the persecution of citizens believed to be Communist sympathisers. However, for US policy-makers the major threats were perceived as occurring abroad. Latin American policy-makers, who imported the ONS in the 1950s and 1960s, saw the Cold War as being waged within their territory: they were the host of the superpowers’ indirect confrontations and wars by proxy. This internalised version of the ONS not only helped legitimise military empowerment, but was also used to justify massive violations of citizens’ civil and human rights.
2.2. The New Notion Of National Security

By the 1980s, however, criticism of the ONS gained a new dimension. Increasingly, the contents of the framework, rather than the use that could be made of the notion by political elites, came under attack. Both Southern and Western scholars began to reject the basic image of threat and security proposed by the ONS. Southern scholars claimed that their countries faced a different strategic situation than the West, and that therefore the ONS was inappropriate for them. Western thinkers responding to the changes in the strategic environment in the West after the end of the Cold War also began to reject the image of threat embedded in the ONS. Both schools argued that the notion of national security should be modernised and reformed.

There are important differences between the two schools, most notably the contrast between the interstate security perspective proposed by Western scholars and the more internal preoccupations of Southern ones. However, there are also important commonalities. Both schools detach themselves from the ONS’s central preoccupation with the Cold War and abandon its state-centricity. Instead, they propose a focus on popular and communal security, which leads them to incorporate a series of structural rather than enemy-driven threats into their conception of potential menaces to ‘national security’. They thus propose both a ‘deepening’ and a ‘widening’ of the content of the ONS (Krause and Williams 1996, 230), endorsing what can properly be called New Notion of National Security (NNS).

2.2.1. The New Notion of National Security in the South

Even before the end of the Cold War, several Southern scholars argued that the notion of national security proposed by the West was inappropriate for developing countries. “The nature of threats... will vary from country to country, across issue areas, and over time. It is a grievous error to fix a rigid operational meaning to national security and apply it administratively across the board.” (Azar and Moon 1988, 2). They therefore proposed reforming the content of the notion to make it correspond more closely to Southern realities. In the Southern NNS, ‘national security’ thus comes to embrace a new cause and envisions new threats. However, significant continuities remain, since the idea of national security remains operative, and the view of the state as primarily responsible for providing national security persists.

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83 In addition, members of the post-Cold War Western school include the international level as a third dimension of security - see. notably, (Buzan 1983)
2.2.1.1. Rejecting the Cold War Paradigm

Despite the creation of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1955 and its considerable resonance among the Southern states, few developing countries escaped being implicated in the Cold War. This partly reflects the attitudes of the superpowers, which saw their struggle in global terms and therefore considered developments in the South - including among states who had proclaimed themselves non-aligned - as part and parcel of the on-going Cold War. In addition, however, the Non-Alignment Movement was undermined from within as leaders of individual states sought to reap the political and economic benefits of siding with one of the superpowers. Thus external influence and internal politics combined to ensure that national security formulation in Southern states traditionally reflected the Cold War thinking proposed by the West. This result was further reinforced by intellectual bandwagoning: since the 'whole world' seemed to think of national security in Cold War terms, individual academics and policy makers were tempted to follow suit.

The first step in the construction of the Southern NNS was to jump off this bandwagon and dare to question the assumption that the Cold War defined the security environment of developing countries. Having shed these intellectual blinders, in the 1980s a group of predominantly Southern scholars proposed to examine what the threats Southern states should 'really' be concerned about. "According to these researchers, the constraints imposed by traditional categories of thought have limited our grasp of this reality; our conceptions of security and our policies and institutions for providing security need to change to meet these new challenges..." (Krause and Williams 1996, 233). They ultimately rejected the Cold War framework in favour of a new notion of national security that depicted a very different image of threat and security.

2.2.1.2. The Population as Object of National Security

The second step in the development of the Southern NNS was a re-examination of the appropriate object of 'national security', i.e. of whose security can properly be said to constitute national security. Southern scholars tend to concur with Ayoob (see section I.4.A above) that those in power are likely to be biased towards regime security. However, unlike Ayoob, who concludes simply that we must recognise this fact, proponents of the Southern NNS reject the appropriation of the term 'national' by the state and political elites on normative grounds. For them, the concept of national security has moral value only when it encompasses the security of the population of the state. "When governments rule more by power than by consensus, and

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64 Cuba, for example, though it adhered to the non-aligned movement, was nevertheless viewed by the USA as being part of the Soviet bloc, and treated accordingly.

65 "the internal dimension of 'national security'... therefore forms an integral part of the broader question of 'national security'... in much of the Third World. This... goes a long way to explain why the concept of 'national security' as it is used in the Western literature... needs to be redefined to give it adequate analytical power to explain Third World realities" (Ayoob 1993, 36).
when their authority is seriously contested internally by forceful means, then much of the sociopolitical meaning begins to drain out of the concept of national security” (Buzan 1988, 23).

In the Southern NNS, the population is the proper referent object of national security. The state, on the other hand, should be protected only in so far as it represents and protects the people within it. In other words, the Southern NNS draws on the liberal democratic principle of popular sovereignty rather than state sovereignty as point of departure for the formulation of national security (Mandel 1996, 339). When state and popular security diverge or conflict, therefore, national security requires the pursuit of popular security. “The security of a ‘nation’ is quite a separate matter from the security of a ‘state’. It is perhaps more accurate to argue that national security is equated with ‘communal’ security and state security with that of a ruling ‘regime’ that represents a segment of social or communal interests” (Azar and Moon 1988, 279).

2.2.1.3. Structural Threats

Their emphasis on popular security leads proponents of the Southern NNS to focus on a whole gamut of structural threats to national security: by their definition, objective conditions that endanger popular welfare within a polity threaten national security. Indeed, Southern scholars argued that in developing countries these structural threats were far more serious than any of the dangers traditionally identified as national security threats. “Scholars making these arguments... seek to reorient security studies (and policies)... by asserting that what is really threatened is not an abstraction like ‘the state’, but the material well-being of individuals” (Krause and Williams 1996, 233). For them, the most urgent menaces Southern communities face are not the ideological overthrow of core institutions or so-called ‘national values’, nor even a foreign invasion, despite a relatively high incidence of disputed boundaries. The ‘real’ issues for national security in these countries are economic, environmental, and social:

According to the Southern NNS, poverty and underdevelopment, produced and perpetuated by an unfavourable international and domestic environment, combined with high levels of social and economic inequalities, threaten more lives than invasions in many Third World countries. “In Western developed countries, economic threats may well be a ‘matter of more or less’... [i]n the Third World, however, economic security goes beyond a matter of ‘more or less’; it is a life or death matter” (Azar and Moon 1988, 281). And since “socioeconomic problems are known to cause internal instability” (Orwa 1984, 209), poverty and underdevelopment affect not only the personal safety of individual citizens, but can be aggregated to the community level as national security concerns.

Ecological scarcity and environmental degradation form a second set of concerns.

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66 It is worth noting, however, that the assumption that individuals care more for their own safety and security than for national values such as prestige or shared ideology is eminently contestable. It has undergone a blistering attack, for example, by Wolfers (Wolfers 1979)
"The growing ecological scarcity of resources [threatens]... the organic survival of the national population. ... security of a nation-state could be more related to an organic dependence of its population on its physical environment than on the physical protection of a nation-state from external military threats. This reasoning derives from the reality that the national population constitutes the main component of the nation-state..." (Azar and Moon 1988, 281).

Among social threats, Southern scholars often emphasise ethnic violence, the potential for which is endemic in the South, partly due to colonial divide-and-rule policies. Again, the threat is to the community as a whole as well as to isolated individuals: "Among the many threats to national security originating from PSCs [protracted social conflicts], the most serious is that of the eventual fragmentation or disintegration of the existing social entity through separation or partition." (Azar and Moon 1988, 288). In addition, they may stress malnutrition, the 'population explosion', epidemics (notably AIDS), and many other items on the long list of the social ills in Southern countries. Of course, many of these ills are relevant in the West as well, but proponents of the Southern NNS emphasise the greater imminence of these threats in the South.

None of these threats are agent-driven. They do not result from a deliberate campaign against a particular country by an external power, and human soldiers do not impose them. Nevertheless, proponents of the Southern NNS emphasise that they are real and serious threats, no less dangerous than an invading army. They also stress that these dangers affect entire communities, rather than simply isolated individuals. This fact is important for the argument they wish to make, because only truly communal threats can plausibly be 'elevated' to the level of national security threats. Note, however, that stressing this fact has bizarre consequences: it motivates, for example, the above argument that the most serious threat to national security originating from ethnic violence is the disintegration of the existing social entity. Even more terrifying spectres, surely, are torture, human rights abuses, and genocide, but these threats to the individual tend to be neglected when the focus is on the community. We will have occasion to return to this fact in Chapter 5.

2.2.1.4. Conclusion: Contrast and Continuity

The revisions Southern scholars proposed to the ONS are profound and radical. Despite these reforms, however, important continuities remain between the Southern NNS and the older notion of national security.

While Southern scholars rejected the particular content of the ONS as inappropriate to developing countries, they retained the concept - and the language - of 'national security'. They do not see this concept as a 'poisoned well' that can only be abandoned but as capable of reform. The notion of national security itself, i.e. the concept that national interests as well as territory must be defended against often unconventional attacks is to be rehabilitated rather than jettisoned: 'interests' are simply redefined as popular needs and 'attacks' can emanate from structural factors. This persistence may partly be explained by

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67 Statements like "unlike the developed world..." (Orwa 1984, 204) or "third world countries in general have more difficulty" (Bobrow and Chan 1988, 57) abound in the literature.
intellectual inertia: Buzan, for example, found it necessary to remind scholars that “we need to keep in mind that national security is not the only term on offer” (Buzan 1988, 16). A more profound reason, however, is that proponents of the Southern NNS have an agenda driving their redefinition of national security. They seek to harness state power towards the new goals they propose.

Together with the concept of national security, the Southern NNS retains the traditional insistence on the state as primarily responsible for providing this security. Indeed the reform rather than abandonment of the notion is intended precisely to force states to prioritise economic development, poverty relief, medical care and education by placing them on the national security agenda. They are to replace military might and international prestige as top state (and expenditure) priorities. The Southern NNS is thus proposed as a vehicle for achieving a long-overdue reversal of priorities in Southern states, where the needs of the general population have long been neglected or subordinated to the demands on resources pressed by elites in the name of ‘national security’. This is perhaps one of the Southern NNS’s most intuitively attractive features, but as we shall see in chapter 5, it is also highly problematic.

2.2.2. The New Notion of National Security in the West

In the 1980s, proponents of a reformulation of national security outside the framework of the Cold War were a minority among political thinkers. The reforms proposed by Southern scholars seemed both too unreflective of the continuing Cold War rivalry in the developed world and too politically left-wing to find many imitators among Western nations. The end of the Cold War, however, gave major impetus to the effort of rethinking national security. Since a major pillar of the ONS disappeared with the disintegration of the Soviet bloc, “debates over the nature and meaning of ‘security’ and the future of security studies have been the staple of the field’s post-Cold War agenda.” (Krause and Williams 1996, 229).

At the centre of these debates was the question of the nature of the new security environment. “With the end of the Cold War there has been a shift from the overwhelming threat posed by the Soviet Union to Western security to a new era of risk uncertainty.” (Dandeker 1994, 363). Western scholars tended to agree that the ‘new’ threats were essentially different from the old ones, and often echoed the Southern NNS’s concern with structural rather than agent-driven threats. They also adopted the emphasis on popular rather than state security pioneered by the Southern NNS. However, Western populations seemed less directly affected by most of the structural concerns affecting the South. Thus arose a notion of national security stressing above all the secondary effects of structural threats elsewhere that could affect the national security of Western countries through interdependence.

Once again, then, the Western version of a concept of national security is more externalised than its Southern counterpart. Once again, also, it has been phenomenally influential. It is primarily because of
Western enthusiasm for it that the new notion of national security has gained wide currency in contemporary academic and policy-making circles.

2.2.2.1. The New Security Environment

According to proponents of the Western NNS, neither the national values of Western states nor their national interests are safe in the post-Cold War world.

As regards values, the emphasis has shifted from the Cold War rhetoric of ‘Western civilisation’ to a more concrete concern with democratisation and human rights. Already stressed during the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), since the end of the Cold War human rights have become a central feature of Western, and notably US, foreign policy rhetoric. The argument for treating universal respect for human rights as a security issue tends to stress social interdependence in a global society:

“Why else are we concerned, as a security issue, whether the ongoing Chinese and Russian revolutions will evolve towards open democratic forms and market economies... if we are not ultimately concerned that the fate of these titanic struggles holds potentially catastrophic implications for the security interests of the world society and its diverse and divergent populations?” (Kolodziej 1992, 423).

Regarding interests, Western theorists have adopted a stance similar to the propositions of the Southern NNS, recognising the significance of structural, sub-state level dangers to national security defined partly in terms of popular security needs. In this way “issues such as poverty, disease, environmental degradation, [and] drugs... have come to be directly linked with the concept of security” (Rugumamu 1993, 8). Indeed, some proponents of the Western NNS have echoed the Southern NNS position that “national interest and sovereignty are... less important than the well-being of the individual or the species” (Krause and Williams 1996, 233).

However, with the partial exception of drugs, these dangers tend to be much less acute in the developed West than in the South. Most proponents of the Western NNS acknowledge this. They tend to stress, however, that subnational problems elsewhere affect national security in the West through their potential to breed transnational instability. The key notion in the Western NNS is interdependence between both countries and populations. This interdependence takes many forms. Kolodziej implies that democratisation abroad is a national security issue because its absence generates violent opposition within states, which tends to affect international security. Global economic progress can similarly be constructed as in the interest of

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58 See notably the Helsinki Accord of 1975
59 This is true even for epidemics like AIDS: although disease spreads with little regard for international boundaries, in developed countries there tends to be better access to treatment of symptoms, if not cure. Treatable diseases like dysentery, polio, malaria, or even the common flu, which are routinely cured in the West, are still killing thousands in developing countries
60 “Guerrilla warfare, terrorism, and low-intensity warfare, as the arm of the weak and disenfranchised, are no less central to security studies... the emergence of these social movements... suggests that the state is often a major source of international insecurity” (Kolodziej 1992, 423).
Western security because, for example, underdevelopment in Latin America both encourages coca farming and thus fuels the cocaine trade and motivates the overexploitation of rain forests, which has global environmental consequences.

Proponents of the Western NNS argue that the weak governments of developing countries cannot prevent these transnational consequences of their internal disorders. For their own national security, Western governments should thus help combat the root causes of such transnational threats. Thus the Western NNS elevates structural problems occurring predominantly in the developing world to the level of Western national security interests. The inclusion of national interests abroad into ‘national security’ already proposed by the Western ONS is consequently preserved in the Western NNS, albeit for different reasons: no longer part of a global Cold War, these interests arise because internal and structural problems in other countries are recognised as having transnational or even global repercussions.

2.2.2.2. The Ascendancy of the NNS in the West

The potency of a new idea can be judged by the efforts made to act on it. According to these standards, the NNS has gained ascendancy in the West. Not only are individual countries invoking a version of the NNS to justify interventions abroad, but recent developments within NATO also indicate that the NNS has risen to dominance in this erstwhile bastion of the ONS.

By stressing interdependence as a key feature of the new security environment, the Western NNS suggests that governments must intervene in other countries’ affairs to achieve national security. This places national security in direct opposition to the principles of state sovereignty and non-interference long affirmed as supreme in international relations theory, disregard for which can reach considerable proportions among proponents of the Western NNS. Dark, for example, proposes that

“future ‘legitimate’ targets for military action [abroad] may be the originators of transnational threats. These could include international criminals such as illegal drug-producing cartels... It must be remembered that such groups may well have the capacity to wage terrorist or guerrilla campaigns against Western interests themselves, and could gain access to weapons of mass-destruction...”

(Dark 1996, 12).

Until the late 1990s, directly deploying one’s forces on foreign territory to combat autonomous groups threatening one’s national security was considered illegitimate. Standards in international relations are evolving, however. The 1998 US bombing of Afghanistan and Sudan aimed at suspected international terrorist Osama bin Laden was a spectacular endorsement of Dark’s stance. To justify the attack, US

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51 Additional examples include the fact that poverty and violence in North Africa sends a flood of refugees to Europe and that instability in the Middle East produces terrorist organisations operating around the world. And if Russia sombers in political quagmire, these terrorists may be able to purchase nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons.
president Clinton simply announced: “I ordered our Armed Forces to strike at terrorist-related facilities in Afghanistan and Sudan because of the threat they present to our national security.”

Unilateral intervention to defend national security as defined by the Western NNS remains controversial. However, a less confrontational way of increasing a country’s transnational security is multilateral cooperation. This insight is transforming the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). NATO was created to protect Western Europe from the Soviet Union. It was a creation of the ONS and embodied its principles. At the end of the Cold War, its continued existence thus seemed in question. Instead of dissolving, however, the organisation has in fact grown during the last decade. The central rationale advanced for this development has been the promotion of peace and stability in Europe. The Partnership for Peace programme, for example, was presented as “a new and ambitious initiative intended to enhance stability and security in the whole of Europe.” (Hiester 1995, 31). Two main threats to this stability tend to be identified. The first is economic underdevelopment: for many, the relative economic deprivation of Eastern Europe, now brought into immediate contrast with the prosperity of the West, is the most important potential source of instability in contemporary Europe. NATO members thus increasingly discuss security in economic terms, and emphasise that commitment to peace and stability must be underwritten by vigorous economic assistance. The second perceived threat is ethnic violence. The end of the Cold War is believed to have allowed long suppressed ethnic conflicts to break out in Europe (Hiester 1995, 30), and NATO has played a central role in seeking to douse and limit the spread of the ensuing violence, most notably in former Yugoslavia.

Both of these perceived threats are structural and transnational: they are attributed to economic and social conditions in Eastern Europe but are seen to threaten Europe as a whole through interdependence. Critics argue that NATO’s new security focus is misplaced. For example, Carpenter contends that Eastern Europe’s “internecine or bilateral conflicts do not affect the global - or in most cases, even the European - geopolitical balance” (Carpenter 1992, 33-34) and therefore are not genuine security issues. Dealing with these matters, according to Carpenter, makes NATO “a sort of Red Cross with tanks” (Carpenter 1992, 14).

Proponents of the NNS counter that critics are clinging to an antiquated notion of national security. Judging from the way in which NATO has acted, they seem to have won the argument. NATO’s persistence and growth is testimony to the fact that the NNS has effectively replaced the ONS as the dominant security paradigm in the West.

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73 The conflict has been most violent in Yugoslavia, but hostility has also emerged between Czechs and Slovaks, Poland and Lithuania, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey, Romania and Hungary.
2.2.2.3. Conclusion

With the end of the Cold War, the NNS has achieved dominance in the West, replacing the hitherto dominant ONS discourse. The NNS in the West is similar to its Southern incarnation in its focus on a wide range of structural threats including underdevelopment, disease, and ethnic violence, but differs in the perceived source of threat, focussing on transnational rather than internal dangers. Both versions, however, share the fundamental desire to reform the ONS rather than abandon it, a desire perhaps most emblematically captured by the ascendancy of the NNS within NATO, the former bastion of the ONS.

2.2.3. Conclusion: The New Notion of National Security in Ascendancy

The crucial impetus to the NNS’s ascendancy was the end of the Cold War, which destroyed the very basis of the ONS. This momentous development not only forced a re-evaluation of the concept of national security in the West but also furthered the cause of the hitherto marginal Southern NNS, since the two paradigms are complementary. If the West stresses that structural problems abroad constitute threats to its national security through interdependence, it thereby validates and even encourages claims that these issues are also internal national security threats for the Southern states in which they occur. Both versions of the NNS, therefore, have gained considerable appeal and prominence since the end of the Cold War.

In both incarnations, the NNS proposes a profound reform of the notion of national security. It deepens the concept, making the security of people rather than states its primary focus of concern. It also broadens the notion: underdevelopment, poverty, disease, famine, crime, and ethnic violence are designated to be security concerns. These threats differ from those proposed by the ONS in being predominantly structural rather than agent-driven. Thus the NNS conceives of the content of ‘national security’ in an entirely new manner. It does not, however, abandon the language of national security. The project of proponents of the NNS in both the South and the West is not to discard the ONS entirely but to reform it, harnessing its powerful rhetoric to a new cause.
2.3. CONCLUSION

The notion of national security was originally formulated in the 1940s, and reflected both the lessons US policy makers had learned from contemporary European history and the security environment they perceived themselves to be in given the incipient Cold War. The historical lessons provided the basic parameters of the concept of national security (notably the abandonment of a purely territorial notion of defence), but the specific content of the original ONS was given by the environment to which it was applied. US policy-makers saw themselves as engaged in a global ideological war, in which the forces of World Communism threatened liberty and democracy everywhere. They also knew that this war could not be fought by conventional or nuclear means: the nuclear balance of terror and the danger of nuclear escalation forced confrontation to become covert and indirect. The notion of national security they developed reflected this threat perception. In the context of globalising tendencies of the Cold War, the ONS was subsequently adopted throughout the Western bloc. Local elites reformulated the notion, however, to reflect their own threat scenarios. Thus in its Latin American version the ONS was internalised, as Latin American leaders proclaimed their countries to on the frontline of a Cold War waged between the superpowers by proxy and internal subversion.

Both the original and the Latin American version of the ONS legitimated illiberal and undemocratic practices. In the West, concentration of power within the executive and executive discretion in specifying the content of the ambiguous notion of ‘national security’ empowered the state vis-à-vis its citizens. In addition, the ONS justified infringements on individuals’ rights during the McCarthy era. In Latin America, the ONS legitimated even more disturbing developments, including the empowerment of the military and large-scale abuses of citizens’ civil and human rights.

Neither version of the ONS remains in use today. This abandonment is not motivated by the critiques made against the legitimating functions of the ONS, however. Instead, it reflects a consensus that the picture of states’ security environment painted by the ONS is no longer relevant in the post-Cold War era. This fact is critically important because it helps explain the contemporary trend towards reforming rather than jettisoning the notion of national security.

The end of the Cold War made the ONS’s irrelevance more prominent than its inherent dangers. A new generation of scholars therefore rushed to make it more relevant to the contemporary world, without considering that the concept of ‘national security’ might be inherently pernicious. The reforms they proposed were profound. They deepened the concept by expanding it beyond the state security, stressing in particular that a country’s population was the proper object of ‘national security’. They also broadened the notion of national security by focussing on economic, environmental, and social menaces as well as the traditional military and agent-driven threats to national security. What they proposed was thus a radically revised concept that merited its appellation of ‘new notion of national security’.
In the vacuum of post-Cold War security studies, the NNS quickly gained ascendancy. Both the Southern and the Western versions of the concept are now dominant in their respective parts of the world. For proponents of the NNS, this was more than a theoretical victory. The NNS’s champions have a political agenda: they believe that the national security paradigm can be put to good practical use through the reforms they propose. They hope to promote social programmes like economic development, poverty relief, medical care and education campaigns by placing popular security and structural threats menacing it on the national security agenda. This is why they go beyond simply criticising the ONS as inapplicable to the post-Cold War world to advocating a radical revision of the notion that nevertheless retains the basic concept of national security and the vocabulary surrounding it. Proponents of the NNS emphatically stress that the issues they emphasise are national security issues because they want something to be done about them.

Although this project is intuitively attractive, however, it requires neglecting the experience of the ONS, which warns that the very concept of national security may be dangerous in a liberal democracy. These critiques – that ‘national security’ is an ambiguous concept, that it empowers the executive and encourages the military, and that especially in its internalised versions it presents a real danger to individuals’ rights – suggest that the notion of national security should be abandoned rather than reformed. The central question of this thesis is whether the NNS is sufficiently transformed to avert a repetition of the legitimisation processes of the ONS.
CHAPTER 3:
NATIONAL SECURITY IN SOUTH AFRICA: PAST AND PRESENT

This chapter traces South Africa’s experience with the national security paradigm. Section I documents the development of an internalised ONS in South Africa from the 1950s to the 1980s and explores the impact that the adoption of this notion had on South African politics. It concludes that the adoption of the ONS in South Africa legitimised executive and military empowerment and widespread repression. Section II focuses on the contemporary South African trend towards adopting a version of the NNS as a framework for policy making. It begins with an examination of the NNS’s ascendancy within the South African political discourse, and then investigates the issues which have gained prominence as ‘national security threats’ under this new paradigm: poverty and economic development, crime, and illegal immigration. The section also considers whether South Africa has adopted a Western or a Southern NNS, i.e. whether within the new framework, national security threats are envisaged as national or transnational problems. It argues that despite a strong regionalist lobby, the government has adopted a predominantly Southern notion.

Post-1994 South Africa has thus adopted a notion of national security substantially different from the one that legitimised the abuses of the 1980s. The crucial question for the next chapter, however, will be whether it is different enough to preclude further abuses in the future.

3.1. The Old Notion Of National Security In South Africa

This section begins by exploring the slow rise of the ONS to political ascendancy in South Africa. Although important elements of the notion were present from the 1950s onwards, the ONS was not fully espoused by the South African government until the late 1970s, when it took the form of ‘Total Onslaught’ theory. In the 1980s, the paradigm was amended to ‘Revolutionary Onslaught’ theory. The section then explores the impact of this development for South African politics. It focuses on three broad dimensions. First, at the institutional level, both the executive and the military were empowered through the development and ascendancy of the National Security Management System (NSMS). Second, at the broader political level, the executive was further empowered by the effective delegitimation of critics and opposition. Finally, at the social level, the adoption of the ONS inaugurated a period of severe repression. In all three dimensions, the role of the ONS was primarily legitimisation: it made particular kinds of behaviour publicly defensible.
3.1.1. The Rise of the Old Notion of National Security in South Africa

The term 'national security' was first formally introduced in South Africa in the Potgieter Commission's report published in 1971. Established by Prime Minister Vorster in 1969, the commission's brief had been to inquire into "certain intelligence aspects of state security". More specifically, it was to advise on how to attenuate rivalries between the Department of Military Intelligence (DMI) and the Bureau of State Security (BOSS), whose debilitating effect had been brought home by the security forces' failure to prevent the explosion of the 1964 Station bomb. In addition to practical recommendations for restructuring the security forces, however, the Potgieter report also offered an analysis of why intensified co-operation was necessary. It argued that South Africa's national security was being threatened by a concerted multifaceted attack on the South African state operating in not only the military but also the political, social, economic, and psychological spheres.

As the first document formally enunciating a South African national security paradigm, the 1971 Potgieter report was certainly a milestone. Nevertheless it would be inaccurate to centre on this date as marking the emergence of the ONS in South Africa. Some elements of the ONS were present in South Africa long before 1971, while the emergence of national security as the dominant policy paradigm occurred only in the late 1970s, when P.W. Botha, an ardent believer in the Total Onslaught Theory foreshadowed in the Potgieter Report, became Prime Minister.

3.1.1.1. South Africa and the Cold War: 'Under Attack' from the 1950s

South Africa was an early 'convert' to the Cold War, placing itself firmly in the Western camp from the late 1940s onwards. Already in 1949, the Malan government offered the country to the Commonwealth "as a base during a war with the Soviet Union" (Seegers 1996, 107). Responding to early rhetoric by Great Britain and the USA about South Africa's strategic importance as source of precious metals and key to the sea routes of Southern Africa, South Africa saw itself as a crucial member of the Western alliance. As such, it regarded itself as an eminent target for the indirect warfare strategies of the USSR: the Communist powers would seek to weaken the West by gaining control of South Africa through infiltration and subversion (Selfe 1987, 40).

The 1950s confirmed the South African government in this belief. Demonstrations after the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 were interpreted as signalling domestic support for Communism. Since the banned South African Communist Party (SACP) then allied itself with domestic opposition to the barrage of

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54 Note the parallel to the USA 24 years earlier, where the National Security Act also arose out of an effort to attenuate inter-service rivalries.
55 See pp.33-34 of the abridged version of the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Matters Relating to the Security of the State (SA Government, Pretoria, 1971). Note the parallel to the USA 24 years earlier, where the National Security Act also arose out of an effort to attenuate interdepartmental rivalries - although in the US case these rivalries were between army, air force and navy.
apartheid laws passed in the early 1950s, that opposition, too, was viewed as Communist-inspired\(^6\). The 1952 Defiance Campaign, in particular, was blamed on Communist agitation. The South African government responded to this challenge by strengthening its legal arsenal through the 1953 Public Safety Act\(^7\), the 1953 Criminal Law Amendment Act\(^8\), and the sharpening of the Riotous Assemblies Act in 1956. In addition, the 1958 Police Act expanded South Africa’s police force (SAP) and established the primacy of the ‘Security Branch’ within it, whose main duty was the “preservation of internal safety” (Seegers 1996, 125).

In addition, after 1958 the government, now headed by Verwoerd, replaced the rhetoric of White Supremacy with one of ‘Racial Utopia’ and ‘Separate Development’. It proposed the creation of separate ‘homelands’ for Africans, arguing that “just as Europe and its colonial masters were assisting African nations towards maturity and independence, so the whites of South Africa had to assist the black ethnic tribes (nations) in South Africa towards their independence” (van Zyl Slabbert 1987, 5). The tactic aimed to decrease domestic opposition, counter moral doubt among white South Africans, and gain acceptance of South Africa in the West, all of which would help fortify South Africa against the threat of world communism. The move proved a disappointment, however. Domestically, the disenfranchised interpreted it as an attack on their status as citizens and thus increased rather than diminished their protest. “The disenfranchised... were going to lose their citizenship... For many, this was fighting talk.” (Seegers 1996, 119). Confrontation escalated until, in 1960, an anti-pass demonstration in Sharpeville ended in a massacre, fuelling international opprobrium of the Apartheid State. Claims that decisive action against the protesters had been necessary to avert a Communist onslaught\(^9\) found little credence internationally and failed to forestall three condemnatory UN Security Council resolutions urging a voluntary arms embargo against South Africa. Thus the programme of Grand Apartheid failed in two of its three objectives, alienating both disenfranchised South Africans and the international community. It did, however, succeed in providing a new basis for the apartheid state that was more morally acceptable to white South Africans.

Thus South Africa saw itself as a target for Communist attack from the 1940s onwards. The events of the 1950s appeared to confirm this perception, and generated two further lessons: that the Communist threat might seek to operate through domestic subversion, and that South Africa could not rely on the West for protection.

\(^6\) For an account of perceptions of the 1950 demonstrations within the police in particular, see (Diepenaar 1988, 225-227). According to N. Mandela, one factor taken as evidence of the Communist tendencies within the domestic opposition was the inclusion of a nationalisation clause in the 1955 Freedom Charter: *Long Walk to Freedom* (Little&Brown, Boston, 1994).

\(^7\) This Act facilitated the declaration of a State of Emergency by the government.

\(^8\) This Act expanded the scope of actions punishable as criminal public violence offences.

\(^9\) This claim is advanced, for example, in the *John X. Merriman*, newsletter of the English Speaking Branch of the National Party, Bulletin No.3 (Jan. 1961), p.3
3.1.1.2. ‘Total Onslaught’

This perceived Communist threat did not, however, immediately lead to the adoption of an internalised ONS framework by the South African government, mainly because the government emerged from the 1960s confident in its ability to root out the threat. Only in the mid to late 1970s did threat perceptions increase sufficiently to prompt the official adoption of Total Onslaught theory, South Africa’s first version of the ONS.

The 1960s began ominously. Following the Sharpeville massacre, the African National Congress (ANC) renounced non-violence and began a sabotage campaign. The new Minister of Justice, B. J. Vorster, “took the view that the country was on the verge of revolution, the product of agitators” (Seegers 1996, 125). In 1964, the Johannesburg Station Bomb seemed to confirm these fears. The assault was not only brutal in attacking a soft (i.e. civilian) target, it was also indiscriminate, killing white and African commuters alike. The fact that the bomb was planted by white students, moreover, seemed to indicate that ideology, not race relations, had driven the attack. The brutal communist attack thus appeared well advanced.

However, the government took decisive action in its own defence. It declared a state of emergency in the aftermath of the Sharpeville ‘incident’ to forestall further demonstrations. The ANC and the PanAfrican Congress (PAC) were banned and driven underground. In 1963, the Security Police struck a serious blow to ANC resistance by discovering the centre of its operations in Rivonia. It arrested prominent ANC leaders, including Mandela, Mbeki, and Sisulu, and confiscated evidence of a planned SACP/ANC joint operation, which enabled it to secure long-term prison sentences for these leaders. In 1965, SACP leader Braam Fisher, too, was arrested, signifying to many “the demise of the Communist movement in the Republic of South Africa.” (Dippenaar 1988, 340). Station bomber Harris was also rapidly arrested, tried, and executed. “Until the end of the 1960s, this response... made for a state of relative domestic quiet.” (Seegers 1984, 23)

The early 1970s, therefore, found the government supremely confident in its own ability to counter and contain the ‘Communist threat’. Consequently, the rhetoric of an imminent Communist menace subsided. The Potgieter Commission Report, released in 1971, was taken seriously but aroused little panic. Its practical recommendations - notably the institution of a central body to determine intelligence priorities - were enacted, but its dramatic depiction of a concerted attack on national security was generally treated more as a rationale for institutional co-operation than as describing an imminent deadly threat. On domestic matters, the government was equally confident: Racial Utopia, though perhaps meeting initial resistance, would bring harmony as different ‘races’ lived their separate lives. This confidence even had foreign policy repercussions: converts to this view could face the 1974 fall of the Salazar regime in Portugal and the subsequent independence of Angola and Mozambique with relative sanguinity. Most notably, Vorster

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80 For details of the Security Intelligence and State Security Council Act which incorporated these recommendations, see (Roherty 1992, 72)
embarked on a policy of ‘détente’ towards the newly independent states north of South Africa’s borders (Selfe 1987, 58).

However, the optimism of the early 1970s was not universally shared. Most significantly, Defence Minister P. W. Botha refused to be ‘lulled’ into ‘false confidence’. Reaffirmed in his convictions by the Potgieter report, Botha continued to argue that South Africa was “being threatened by the global and overall strategy under the leadership of aggressive communism... [which] applies to virtually every sphere of life” (Seegers 1996, 132). He insisted that there was an imminent, serious, and multifaceted Communist threat to South African national security - a “Total Onslaught” - and his opinion was widely shared within the South African Defence Force (SADF), which he headed.

The events of the mid-1970s favoured the popularisation of Total Onslaught theory. Despite Vorster’s sanguinity, the advent of African rule in the former Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique shocked many South Africans. It breached the cordon sanitaire of white rule around South Africa’s borders, and the sense of security hitherto prevalent in South Africa suffered from the realisation that this left South Africa exposed to cross-border guerrilla strikes. Matters were aggravated by the fact that Angola’s MPLA had known contacts with the USSR (Roherty 1992, 35). Botha’s accusation that Vorster’s détente policy was simply “appeasement” (Selfe 1987, 59) thus met receptive ears. His audience expanded as a series of diplomatic and military setbacks further eroded South African self-confidence: The SADF was abandoned by its French and American allies in Angola and humiliated by ‘Marxist’ Angolan and Cuban troops. South Africa’s actions in Namibia were being contested in the UN, an organisation which South Africans believed to be hoodwinked by Soviet propaganda. Worst of all, the South African government faced its first serious internal challenge since the 1960s in the form of the 1976 Soweto uprising. Botha thus seemed to have been proven right by the events of the mid-1970s. When the men most closely linked with the climate of confidence of the early 1970s were discredited in the 1977 ‘Information Scandal’, he was therefore ideally positioned to fill the political vacuum.

Botha became Prime Minister in 1978. Under his leadership, Total Onslaught theory became the official policy-making framework of the South African government. This theory affirmed six central tenets, none of which were entirely new, but which had never stood together as a coherent national security paradigm endorsed by the highest levels of South Africa’s political and military leadership:

First, the Cold War was critically important. An apocalyptic global battle was being fought “between the powers of chaos, Marxism, and destruction on the one hand and the powers of order, Christian civilisation

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81 Since 1968, the SADF assigned the texts of André Beaufre as integral part of military training. These texts clearly articulated the ONS view of the Cold War, arguing that “the whole field of [contemporary] international relations constituted a battlefield in which the Communist powers, thwarted in the use of force by the nuclear stalemate, were attacking the West by indirect means” (Roherty 1992, 42). Beaufre also argued that victory in such a battle “may be achieved by military victory but it is by no means the only way... other methods may frequently be more effective” (Beaufre, 1973, 300). Thus, the SADF orthodoxy concluded, South Africa had to realise that Communism could attack on many fronts, and use as diverse implements as sabotage, terrorism, treason, and propaganda.
and the upliftment of people on the other.” (Grundy 1986, 11). South Africa, of course, had to fight on the side of Good against Evil.

Second, South Africa was a primary target of Soviet expansionism. As the Steyn Commission report declared, “the ultimate aim of the Soviet Union and its allies is to overthrow the present body politic in the RSA and to replace it with a Marxist-oriented form of government” (Selfe 1987, 72). The reason for this aggression was taken from Beaufre: possession of South Africa was an essential part of Soviet indirect strategy against the West. “The RSA is Moscow’s stepping stone to world conquest” (Selfe 1987, 70).

Third, Communism was advancing rapidly in Africa, and had already reached South Africa’s borders. Angola and Mozambique had already fallen, Rhodesia was embattled. South Africa was the West’s last bastion in Africa.

Fourth, Communist propaganda, a major prong in the Soviet attack, had scored a decisive victory by isolating South Africa internationally. Hoodwinked by Soviet lies, the West understood neither South Africa’s strategic importance in the Cold War nor the monumental battle South Africa was fighting for the Western world. It had largely abandoned South Africa. Worse, while “Marxist militarism [was] casting a shadow over Africa… the Western powers [were] still tak[ing] part in a senseless arms embargo against the RSA” (South African Government 1977 Defence White Paper).

Fifth, Soviet strategy was not merely military. The threat would not be immediately visible in form of an invading Soviet Army. Instead, as Botha had long argued and the Potgieter Commission verified, Soviets methods would include infiltration, fomenting unrest, economic sabotage (especially through encouragement of strikes), and propaganda. “The unconventional onslaught will increase until bases are in readiness for a conventional onslaught. The subversion, the sowing of confusion, the creation of disorder will increase until the death blow can be struck… This is the essence of the struggle we are involved in” (Selfe 1987, 45). In short, the onslaught was Total. The South African response had to be as comprehensive. As Malan put it in his 1984 article in ISSUP, “a total strategy is necessary, because a total onslaught against the RSA can only be overcome by a co-ordinated application of all the means at the RSA’s disposal” (van Zyl Slabbert 1987, 5).

Finally, the Soviet strategy could involve South Africans. Soviets would seize on the ‘tensions’ within the country - notably among ‘races’ - to foment unrest. The ANC and, of course, the SACP were prime minions of the Soviet state. Soviet influence, however, was not restricted to these. Civil society as a whole was constantly in danger of being infiltrated by dual agents: “like the rest of the Free World, the RSA is a target for international communism and its cohorts - leftist activists, exaggerated humanism, permissiveness, materialism, and related ideologies” (Botha, quoted in Selfe, 1987).

Thus Total Onslaught theory encapsulates the main tenets of the ONS. Its adoption as the dominant policy-making paradigm of the South African government was made possible by the shattering of the relative
quiescence that the apartheid state enjoyed in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The fall of the Portuguese colonial empire, South African setbacks in Angola and Namibia, and the internal upheaval of the SOWETO riots combined to drastically escalate the threat perceptions of white South Africans. Total Onslaught Theory, actively promoted by Botha and the SADF, thrived in this newly hostile environment. The ONS completed its ascendancy in South Africa when Botha replaced Vorster as Prime Minister in 1978.

3.1.1.3. ‘Revolutionary Onslaught’

Total Onslaught theory could not adequately explain the internal upheavals of the mid-1980s, however. These events therefore prompted a revision of Botha’s concept to include a more domestic focus. The revised version Total Onslaught theory was ‘Revolutionary Onslaught’ theory. It represented a more internalised version of the ONS.

In 1970, Botha had still claimed that the menace to South African national security was “not primarily a matter of apartheid or parallel development...” (Selfe 1987, 46). The threat, propagated by the Soviet Union, was World Communism, and not apartheid but its strategic position made South Africa a target for attack. Some South Africans might be recruited as double agents for this global and regional threat, but the core menace was believed to operate mostly beyond South Africa’s borders. These perceptions were challenged by the violence that erupted within South Africa following the institution of the Tri-Cameral Parliament in 1983.

The sheer scale of this violence made it impossible to argue that threats to South Africa’s national security emanated only from across South Africa’s borders. Domestic actors had clearly become major sources of instability, prompting Roherty to comment: “Now the center of gravity [of the struggle] lies within the borders of the Republic, not outside. South African analysts begin to trace a metamorphosis in the Onslaught in which its latent revolutionary character is manifest.” (Roherty 1992, 126). This observation seemed confirmed by the ANC’s 1985 announcement that it was launching an “armed mass insurrection” inside South Africa and planned to make the country “ungovernable” through a campaign of violence, terrorism, sabotage and strikes.

Revolutionary Onslaught theory “framed domestic turbulence as a combination of external and internal problems” (Seegers, 1996, 193). It argued that despite the efforts of the white settlers South Africa remained in important respects a Third World country. The country was blighted with poverty and a lack of social and economic infrastructure that perhaps past governments had failed to give sufficient attention to. Now these ‘regrettable’ (but, for the Third World, ‘normal’) internal problems were being exploited by Communist agitators, including, most importantly, the ANC. Domestic discontents were being recruited by the ANC to wreak havoc within the country. Thus internal tensions rendered South Africa vulnerable to a Communist threat operating through subversion within its own borders.
Thus the internal unrest of the 1980s sapped the plausibility of Total Onslaught theory, which proposed a primarily external source of national security threats. Revolutionary Onslaught theory amended Botha's paradigm to enable it to address the increasingly internal nature of threats to the apartheid state. The result was a more fully internalised national security paradigm similar to the Latin American ONS.

3.1.1.4. Conclusion

The apartheid government chose sides early in the Cold War. By the 1950s it already perceived South Africa as a strategically important member of the Western bloc and hence an eminent target for Soviet attack. However, the ONS evolved only gradually in South Africa, and was not formally endorsed by the South African government until the late 1970s. The reason for this delay lies in the efficiency with which the state was able to quell the unrest of the early 1960s: having banned the major opposition parties, imprisoned their leaders, and reformed its legal system and security forces to deal more effectively with internal 'agitators', the government believed that it had largely uprooted the Communist threat. When this era of quiescence came to an abrupt end in the mid-1970s due to the collapse of the Portuguese colonial empire and the SOWETO riots, the ONS gained renewed appeal. It was promoted by the SADF and Botha in the guise of Total Onslaught theory, and became the formal security paradigm of the South African government with Botha's ascension to power in 1978. However, the theory championed by Botha was too externally oriented to adequately explain the internal violence of the mid-1980s and therefore had to be revised. The result was Revolutionary Onslaught theory, which explained internal unrest as arising from developmental tensions within South Africa. According to this theory, the internal friction inherent in an under-developed system created internal discontents who could readily be recruited, radicalised, and exploited by Communist agitators. Revolutionary Onslaught theory thus presented a more internalised version of the ONS.

3.1.2. The Impact of the Old Notion of National Security in South Africa

The adoption of the ONS framework in South Africa had three major repercussions. First, it legitimised the transfer of power from existing representative institutions (such as they were) to the State Security Council (SSC), whose creation it had prompted. It thus justified the political empowerment of the executive and of the security establishment. Second, it allowed for the denunciation and delegitimation of the political opposition, thus further increasing the autonomy of the government. Finally, the ONS legitimised oppression and massive infringement of individuals' rights. This oppression became more pronounced as the government shifted to Revolutionary Onslaught, the more internalised version of the ONS. This section examines each of these repercussions in turn.
3.1.2.1. The Rise to Power of the SSC

The adoption of the ONS led to institutional changes within the South African state. It justified the establishment of a centralised National Security Management System (NSMS) and legitimised transferring from parliament to the apex of this system.

Once the ONS had been adopted in South Africa, order became a goal in itself:

"The National Party Government under P W Botha shifted from pro-actively motivating whites in favour of Apartheid/Separate Development... to reactively motivating them against the 'Total Onslaught'. That is why the values of security and stability have begun to lose their instrumental character and have become ends in themselves." (van Zyl Slabbert 1987, 7).

For Botha, 'security' and 'stability' were primary goals, which had to be striven for efficiently and effectively. In the early 1970s, however, neither efficiency nor effectiveness were hallmarks of the South African state, whose bureaucracy was bloated and extraordinarily fragmented. In fact, Botha's own accession to power was expedited by the Information Scandal, which revealed the corruption and ineptitude that had mired the previous government. Botha "said he valued above all else the need for 'clean' government coupled with 'teamwork'" (Seeger, 1996, 162), and indeed institutional reform became a central preoccupation for his government.

The outcome of this reform was NSMS. At the centre of this system was the State Security Council (SSC), which had been created by the Security Intelligence and State Security Council Act in the wake of the Potgieter report. The original purpose of the SSC was to co-ordinate security information in order to avoid repetition of the communication failure that had resulted in the security forces' inability to prevent the Station Bomb. Although created as merely an advisory body, the SSC grew substantially in 1979, following the Soweto uprisings and South African involvement in the Angolan war (Grundy 1986, 53). It acquired a large permanent secretariat, a regular meeting schedule, and a new function: to elaborate and help implement national security strategy. A complex system of national security institutions hierarchically ordered under the SSC - Interdepartmental Committees, Joint Management Centres, Sub-Joint Management Centres, Mini Joint Management Centres, and Local Management Centres - was created to allow the SSC to perform this new task. This vertical institutional structure allowed security policy to be efficiently implemented at all levels of government, from the national to the local, thus overcoming the fractious nature of state administration (Seegers 1988).

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62 Decades of using state employment as source of patronage powers had led to an overstuffed civil service (van Zyl Slabbert 1987, 5). In addition, Separate Development had caused a horizontal multiplication of administration, since different 'racial' groups were administered by different institutions - for example, by separate education departments (Seegers 1988, 24).

63 Interdepartmental rivalry had led the Department of Military Information to keep vital information about the organisation who laid the bomb, the African Resistance Movement (ARM), from the South African Police (Seegers 1996, 132).

64 For a detailed discussion of the functions of these various levels, see (Seegers 1988).
The NSMS stood in conflict with liberal democratic traditions on two grounds. First and most noted is the fact that the structure was dominated by personnel from the security establishment, including the SADF and the various intelligence services. Although civilian bureaucrats were formally and compulsorily associated with the system, they had little influence over the decisions made within it (Seegers 1988, 15). The contemporary clamour that civilian administration was being replaced by army rule was somewhat inaccurate, since at the local and municipal levels the SAP benefited even more than the SADF while within the SSC, the security forces predominated: the National Intelligence Service (NIS) alone furnished 56% of the SSC’s personnel, against the SADF’s 16%. Nevertheless it is undeniable that the NSMS institutionalised the military’s place in domestic administration (reversing the external orientation liberal democrats stress) and empowered those in uniform vis-à-vis the civilians who, according to the liberal democratic doctrine of civil supremacy, should have been their superiors.

Although valid, this criticism obscured an even more vital point by focusing on the NSMS as merely an administrative system. The second and more fundamental conflict between the NSMS and liberal democratic values lay in the fact that the SSC’s functions expanded well beyond its formal role of advising Cabinet to include the formulation and implementation of policy.

Formally, the NSMS was instituted to restore administrative coherence and thus aid the efficient implementation of security policy. Its head, the SSC, was to merely advise Cabinet, remaining subordinate to it. In practice, however, it came to dominate Cabinet85. The SSC enjoyed an informational advantage over Cabinet because of its function as nodal point to which information about “most if not all the NSMS’ security channel actions” flowed (Seegers 1988, 14). Chaired by Botha himself, moreover, the SSC was “composed of political heavyweights supplemented by the highest-ranking political and governmental experts in security and strategy. When they recommend[ed] policy, the cabinet [was] unlikely to refuse them” (Grundy 1986, 51). By the early 1980s, the SSC’s meetings had been rescheduled to precede Cabinet’s, effectively allowing it to set the Cabinet’s agenda.

In sum, by the 1980s “effective decision-making authority in South Africa reside[d] in the SSC if one looks at the actual political relationships instead of at the organisational charts and the formal legalisms.” (Grundy 1986, 50). This evolution was rather more objectionable than military take-over of purely administrative functions. Rationalising the administrative system in the interest of efficiency is one thing86, allowing this ‘administrative system’ to dominate policymaking quite another. The situation was further aggravated by the fact that under ‘Total Onslaught’ the scope of what constituted security matters (and thus

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85 Grundy (Grundy 1986, 54) has compared the informal role of the body to that in the Soviet politburo: formally, the political power rested in the Soviet state, headed by the Council of Ministers, but informally the ‘decisional locus’ clearly rested within the Communist Party.

86 though in this case not a small one, since doing so meant dismantling a system based on the previously sacrosanct principles of racial segregation and separate development in the interest of efficiency: “The NSMS... sustained an impetus towards rationalisation by placing function (security, welfare, and communication) above race... In this sense, the NSMS represented the death of Racial Utopia and the birth of a different administrative state” (Seegers 1996, 173).
fell into the SSC’s sphere of competence) was extraordinarily wide. On all these issues, the two main representative institutions in South Africa, Parliament and the National Party, were effectively sidelined. Power was concentrated in the hands of the executive and the security forces.

This blow to South Africa’s democracy (such as it had been) was legitimised by reference to the ‘Total Onslaught’ national security framework. Shifting the locus of decision-making to the SSC was justified by stressing the need for secrecy in the country’s war against the Total Onslaught. South Africa’s weapons in this war included infiltration, espionage, and, from the early 1980s onwards, covert operations (Seegers 1996, 184-187) - all of which required secrecy to be effective. Furthermore, formulating security policy involved handling much ‘sensitive information’ which, if it reached the wrong ears, might fuel the enemy’s war effort or undermine one’s own. How, then, could strategy be discussed openly in Parliament - especially given the presence of opposition members like the Liberals - or at the Party caucus? Thus “parliamentarians met defeat upon defeat if they wanted to inspect security affairs” (Seegers 1996, 192). The demands of the war made open policy-making impossible. In the interest of national security, representative institutions were told they should resign themselves to be sidelined.

Thus a first repercussion of the adoption of the ONS in South Africa was a concentration of state power and the empowerment of the executive at the expense of parliament and hence the electorate. This was legitimised by reference to the need for secrecy and decisiveness in addressing the security problems posed by the Communist enemy. In addition, the military was drawn into domestic affairs, thus reversing its external orientation and threatening to undermine civil supremacy. Again, this was defended as necessary to ensure order, stability, and national security. Thus the adoption of the ONS justified several policies that ran counter to fundamental liberal democratic tenets about the appropriate structure of the state.

3.1.2.2. The Delegitimation of the Opposition:

The ONS also provided the South African government with a powerful weapon against political opposition. Both critics of the national security state itself and opposition groups challenging specific aspects of the government’s policies could be effectively delegitimised by appeal to Total or Revolutionary Onslaught theory.

3.1.2.2.1. Critics of the National Security State

The ONS allowed the South African government to delegitimise critics of the national security state by claiming that they either wilfully or unwittingly endangered the state’s survival. Three groups of critics could be addressed by this logic:

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66 Note that this confirms Wolfers’s fears concerning national security as an “ambiguous symbol”.

66 University of Cape Town
First, organisations challenging the apartheid state, including the ANC and the SACP, were depicted within the Total Onslaught theory as agents of the Communist onslaught. This strategy was all the more effective because both parties really were supported by the USSR. Under Total/Revolutionary Onslaught theory this automatically placed them in opposition to national security. In the Cold War dialectic of capitalist Good against communist Evil, any organisation linked to communism was by definition an enemy and alien force. The political and moral arguments these organisations advanced against the state could thus be brushed aside by the government as mere political propaganda.

The second group of critics comprised those not originally portrayed as part of the Total Onslaught but whose ‘irrational’ rejection of the regime made them the accomplices of the Communist threat.

“One-man-one-vote, non-racial democracy, freedom of association, unbanning of organisations, the rule of law, the civil liberties of the individual as opposed to the ‘rights of the group’ are values which immediately make a party or organisation who campaigns for the suspect as either ‘a useful idiot’ or a willing collaborator with the ANC. At the same time, the State can select those aspects of ANC strategy or structure which it regards as the most useful for demonising purposes and through guilt by association tar any opposition grouping with the same brush. ‘Terrorism’, ‘violence, and ‘communism’ are the three most common.” (van Zyl Slabbert 1987, 4).

This ‘useful idiot’ rhetoric resonates from the Latin American national security regime cases we have seen.

Finally, the ONS provided a weapon against those who attacked the bases of the national security state by doubting or denying the existence of a ‘Total Onslaught’. For example, Grundy maintained in 1986 that “the total onslaught is not total and has never been” (Grundy 1986, 17). Grundy himself captured how the popularisation of the ONS by the government contributed to silencing this criticism: it created “an atmosphere in which, if you don’t believe in ‘total onslaught’ you, ipso facto, contribute unwittingly to that onslaught” (Grundy 1986, 55). The government maintained not only that these critics were wrong, but also that it was dangerous to believe them, since this would leave the nation fatally exposed to Communist attack. Wolfers’s ‘ambiguous symbol’ is in action here: Since the threat is not visible in the physical form of an army, it cannot be proved not to exist. Grundy relies on circumstantial evidence to ‘prove’ his point - if the onslaught was total, South Africa would be more completely isolated, and levels of violence would be much higher, etc. Such evidence may be evocative, but it is perforce non-conclusive - and in the end, for the government’s constituency, the risk of wrongly disbelieving is larger than that of wrongly believing. The atmosphere of doubt favoured the government over its opposition. “Any person or movement that questions the State’s perceptions of ‘the threat’ is defined as part of it.” (van Zyl Slabbert 1987, 7).

3.1.2.2.2. Critics of Government Policies

The government could also use the ONS paradigm against those who, while accepting the paradigm itself, criticised the government’s policies within it. Domestically, Total Strategy essentially consisted of two elements. The first was co-optive, including notably constitutional reform to formally include ‘Coloureds’
and 'Indians' into the South African state, the recognition of African 'community leaders' (in practice often individuals with limited credibility), and efforts to 'win hearts and minds' (WHAM) by extending services to African communities. The second element, however, was the repression of those who refused to be co-opted into the apartheid state. Critics of this strategy fell into two camps: those who objected to the strategy as too soft, and those who believed it to be too harsh. Both could be overruled by appealing to the requirements of national security.

The "too soft" camp was consolidated in 1982 into the Conservative Party, whose members objected principally to the co-optive and reform-focussed aspects of total strategy. The Tricameral Parliament, in particular, caused outrage. Slabbert argues that because this opposition could "exploit any 'new reform measures'... as a sell-out or capitulation of white interests[,] the irony of the reform programme as part of the total strategy [was] that it force[d] the National Party Government into the extra-Parliamentary arena to make it work" (van Zyl Slabbert 1987, 6). More important, for our purposes, is the recognition that the government could justify using such extra-parliamentary means by maintaining that reform was a matter of national security. These reforms, the government argued, were not open to debates about preferences and morals. They were simply necessary for survival, a position most succinctly captured in Pik Botha's often-quoted aphorism "Adapt or Die". Those critics who could not see that some limited reform and cooptation was necessary for the continued existence of the apartheid state threatened the survival of that state – and thus had to be overruled in the name of national security.

The government's response to those who believed that 'Total Strategy' was too harsh was roughly similar. Those who rejected its repressive mechanisms simply did not understand that these were a necessary, not an optional part of total strategy. Without repression to eliminate agitators and double agents, reforms would not be properly appreciated by the larger population, which would either violently reject the reform package (as had happened with the 1983 constitution) or accept it but refuse to be satisfied by its gains. Furthermore, domestic unrest had to be quelled before economic and social reforms could bear fruit and thus generate the desired conciliatory effect. In short, if reform was necessary to security, as Botha argued against the Conservative Party, security and stability were also necessary for reform. National security could be achieved only through reform controlled and protected by repression. "Reform and repression... are in fact reverse sides of the same coin... With the revolutionary option seemingly foreclosed, the expectations of the majority community with regard to change would decline... Thus, Pretoria used repression to make its reform program acceptable to its black audience" (Price 1991, 91-92).

Thus the conservatives who rejected reform and the progressives who repudiated control could equally be dismissed as harmful to national security. Conservative immobilism should not be allowed to undermine the reform efforts necessary to assure national security, but neither should 'liberal sentimentalism'.

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For example, the electrification programme in Alexandra (Seegers 1996, 182). See also "Change and Continuity: Pretoria's Reform Program", (Price 1991, chapter 4).
whole enterprise of enhancing national security through Total Strategy depended on the adequate mixture of the reform and repression. In the interest of national security, therefore, the government had to overrule objections from both sides. It did so with considerable success, as demonstrated, for example, by the positive outcome of the 1982 referendum on the Tricameral Parliament, where both conservatives and progressives campaigned for a ‘no’ vote.

In sum, therefore, the rhetoric of national security allowed the South African government to sideline and delegitimise its opponents. Delegitimation proved a versatile weapon, which could be wielded to equal effect against fundamental challengers of the apartheid order, doubters of the rhetoric of Total Onslaught, and opponents of specific aspects of Total Strategy both on the political right of the government and on the political left. National security, as Wolfers foretold, was what the government said it was, and the right policies to address security threats were those adopted by the government. To doubt this was to threaten a unified national response to the emergency and thus to endanger national security.

3.1.2.3. Legitimising Oppression

In addition to transforming the political scene in the favour of the executive and the security establishment by concentrating power within the NSMS and allowing for the delegitimation of opponents ‘Total Onslaught’ legitimised the large-scale abuse by government forces of South Africans’ civil liberties and human rights. Apartheid’s opponents were not only rhetorically delegitimised - many were also tortured and killed.

The extent of state violence in the 1980s is still being investigated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Newspapers regularly carry ‘discoveries’ of new facets of state repression - most recently concerning attempts to develop chemical weapons against protesters and resistance leaders⁹⁸. The purpose of this section, however, is not to chronicle these abuses, but to begin to understand how they could be justified. The contention is that ‘Total/Revolutionary Onslaught’ legitimised rights abuses, and that at the root of this legitimation lay a Manichean representation of forces of Chaos and Evil challenging the state, guardian of Order. The demonisation of the adversary justified any use of force against him, and the growing perception that he was operating through South Africa’s civilian population legitimised an escalation in the use of force against that population.

The Total/Revolutionary Onslaught framework did not portray the apartheid state’s policies as aiming merely at safeguarding white supremacy. As Botha insisted, the problem was “not primarily a matter of

⁹⁸ See various articles in issues of the Cape Times, the Cape Argus, the Star, and the Mail and Guardian from June 1998
apartheid or parallel development..." (Selfe 1987, 46). Instead, the menace to national security came from World Communism, an evil that the whole civilised, moral, and religious Western world was at war with. This had two implications. First, it provided a vision of threat against which the regime believed all South Africans could be persuaded to fight against together. Thus the Tricameral Parliament was "presented as a Government of National Unity - the South African people's response to 'the total onslaught'." (van Zyl Slabbert 1987, 7), and the SADF was billed as "a Defence Force of the people for the people" which all population groups should join. Second, opposition to the regime was depicted as part of a great Evil. “[T]he ANC was publicly depicted in the South African state as the next best thing to the devil. It was full of Communists, allied to Communists, and after the Kabwe conference of 1985 officially not opposed to attacking soft targets.” (Seegers 1996, 176). This demonisation helped legitimate state violence against suspected ANC collaborators. “The ANC [was] officially presented in South Africa as a gang of incorrigible villains and demons that must be eliminated and not with whom to negotiate.” (van Zyl Slabbert 1987, 5).

The impact of this legitimation can be measured by establishing its correlation with government repression. One indicator of this repression is the number of people detained under state security legislation. The figures for such detention furnished by the South African Institute for Race Relations confirm that the adoption of the ONS in the 1970s coincided with a substantial escalation of internal repression. The following table shows the discrepancy in detainment levels before and after 1976-77:

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90 Quotation from the 1982 Defence Amendment Bill, which allowed 'non-whites' to join the SADF. (Selfe 1987, 73).
91 The following figures are taken from the South African Institute for Race Relations's Race Relations Surveys, annual publications from 1970 to 1990. The institute uses a combination of own sources, government announcements (often in response to parliamentary question time) and associations such as the Detainees' Parents Support Committee (DPSC) to compile its data.
After a peak of 11,500 detainees after Sharpeville, the number of detentions under security legislation fell significantly in the 1960s and early 1970s, reflecting the period of government confidence noted above.92 The 1976 Soweto uprising was a milestone: not only did the number of detentions peak at 2,430 in the 14 months after June 1976, but annual detention rates remained significantly higher after 1976 than they had been before then. Whereas official figures for new detentions were in the low double-digits between 1969 and 197593, they consistently reached triple-digits in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This coincides with the period of Total Onslaught dominance. It thus appears that this version of the ONS helped legitimised a sustained increase in internal repression.

However, according to the Revolutionary Onslaught ideologues even Total Onslaught theorists underestimated the magnitude of the threat posed by the ANC. As late as 1981, for example, General Viljoen had claimed that countermeasures to the ANC would remain “mainly the responsibility of the police” (Cawthra, Kraak et al. 1994, 95). However, the size of the revolt against the Tricameral Parliament changed such perceptions. Apartheid’s ideologues blamed the revolt on ANC machinations to sabotage the government’s peaceful reform efforts - and the extent of the unrest seemed to demonstrate that the ‘demon’ had managed to turn a large section of the population against the government. The fear this entailed among those who believed in Total/Revolutionary Onslaught theory was exacerbated when the ANC declared in 1985 that

“one of our central tasks in the coming period is to transform the potential we have created into the reality of people’s war. Guided by that perspective, we must build up the mass combat forces that are training themselves in mass political action for sharper battles and for the forcible overthrow of the racist regime.” (Cawthra, Kraak et al. 1994, 122).

These vastly heightened perceptions of internal threat culminated in the partial State of Emergency of 1984 and the full State of Emergency from 1986 onwards. Detention levels skyrocketed: in 1985, 4,389 people were detained under security legislation and an additional 7361 were held under emergency laws. Almost 30,000 were detained in 1986, and an estimated 25,000 were detained between June and December 1987. In 1988, the number of detentions peaked, with 8,000 people in prison on any given day. The following table visualises this increase in detentions documented by the Race Relations Surveys of the period.

92 On the first of January 1972, a total of 430 persons were in detention. by January 1975 that figure sank to 320, and a year later reached 253.
93 The government refused to disclose detentions under the Terrorism Act during this period. However, only 36 persons were detained under the other security laws in 1969, 18 in 1971, 16 in 1972, 14 in 1974, and 23 in 1975 (intermittent years’ data not available).
The scale of detentions dwarfs the peak of detentions in 1976-77. Particularly remarkable is also the shift from detentions under ‘normal’ security legislation to detentions under emergency laws (series 1 and 2 on the graph, respectively): while, for example, officially nobody was held under security legislation in 1988, the DPSC estimates that some 50,000 persons were held under emergency regulations in the nine months before March 1990. Emergency regulations provided much greater powers to state officials, including the right to detain any person for interrogation for up to two weeks and to “apply or order the application of such force as [the official] may deem necessary under the circumstances” while interrogating a detainee (Cawthra, Kraak et al. 1994, 103).

This increase in violence against detainees is emblematic of a general escalation of violence by government forces during the State of Emergency, which also included harassment, blackmail, targeted covert operations aimed at prominent resistance leaders, and, most significantly, the internal deployment of the SADF as permanent back-up to the SAP in 1984. The ascendance of Revolutionary Onslaught theory legitimised this increased repression, the victims of which were mostly civilian. Revolutionary onslaught rhetoric fostered the perception that South Africa was defending itself against an insidious Evil which was subverting the country from within. The fear of infiltration eroded the distinction between civilians and combatants. If civilians allowed the ‘demonic’ ANC to operate in South Africa, they were national security threats by association and had to be eliminated like any other ANC combatant. In a telling statement made in 1988, an SADF deserter reproached the internal security forces for being “like Koevoet on the border - exactly the same. I couldn’t believe they were carrying out such intense operations on harmless civilians. It was even more precise than a border operation, carried out with the same viciousness.” (Cawthra, Kraak et al. 1994, 111). He would have been less surprised had he realised that for those who accepted Revolutionary
Onslaught Theory, the townships had become the border, and therefore the 'harmless civilians' were no longer either harmless or civilian, but active combatants for Evil against the national Good. These perceptions mirrored those of Latin American militaries during their 'dirty wars': Argentine generals, for example,

"were quick to point out that this was no conventional war. 'There were no clear battle lines,' argued General Viola in 1979, 'no large concentrations of arms and men, no final battle to signal victory'. Waged across ideological frontiers this ‘total’ war threatened the most elemental spheres of daily life. The modalities of a free and open society could have no place in this war against subversion.” (Egan 1988, 188-189)

The same sentiment prevailed among South Africa's security force members, the South African government, and at least a sizeable section of the South African population. It effectively gave security forces "a license to kill" (Cawthra, Kraak et al. 1994, 102). The brutality of their actions was condoned and legitimised because they were seen as fighting a 'dirty war' waged by the ANC through mass mobilisation of people who were no longer civilians but combatants.

Thus both the rise of Total Onslaught theory and the ascendance of the Revolutionary Onslaught paradigm coincided with periods of increased state repression. The paradigms did not cause these escalations, but they helped justify and therefore sustain them over time. By demonising the ANC and its sympathisers and portraying them as agents of the communist national security threat, they legitimised violent measures against these individuals as necessary for national security. This presented a significant shift from the past: “Racial Utopia (and its predecessors) never gave policemen and soldiers wholesale license. Total/Revolutionary Onslaught did so repeatedly. It bred fanaticism, within and outside designated channels” (Seegers 1996, 188).

3.1.3. Conclusion

South Africa adopted a version of the ONS in the late 1970s, which evolved from its original relatively outwards-oriented form (Total Onslaught Theory) to a more internalised variant in the mid-1980s (Revolutionary Onslaught Theory). The adoption of this national security framework had three broad effects. First, it legitimised the concentration of executive power and the empowerment of the military within the NSMS. In the State Security Council in particular, "security strategy and indeed other aspects of national policy were formulated by a select group of cabinet ministers and defence, police and intelligence officials, excluding parliament and the broader public from meaningful participation.” (Nathan 1992). Second,

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For examples, see A. de V. Minnaar, The hidden hand: covert operations in South Africa, (Pretoria, HSRC, 1994).
Total/Revolutionary Onslaught enabled the Botha government to undermine its political opposition in the eyes of the ‘white’ electorate. The government could portray those who disagreed with the executive on either principle or strategy as unconsciously or deliberately threatening national security. Finally, Total/Revolutionary Onslaught legitimised violations of individuals’ rights, including their rights to life and to freedom from arbitrary detention and torture. These abuses against South African civilians were ‘justified’ by depicting their victims as converts to and agents of the ‘demonic’ ANC, bent on the destruction of the South African nation in a monumental fight of Good against Evil.

Thus the South African case confirms the predictions about the impact of the ONS elaborated in the previous chapter. As in the USA and Latin America, the adoption of the ONS led to the concentration of state power within the executive and enabled elites to manipulate the content of national security to suit their partisan interests. Like the Latin American armed forces, South Africa’s military also benefited from the adoption of the ONS, although it never went so far as to launch a coup against the civilian government. Finally the ONS legitimised infringements of individuals’ rights in South Africa as it had already done in the USA and Latin America. Moreover, as the contrast between the original ONS in the West and its internalised Latin American version would lead us to predict, the extent of repression escalated dramatically as South Africa turned from Total Onslaught theory to the more internalised Revolutionary Onslaught paradigm. Thus the South African case provides further evidence for the assertion that the ONS legitimised profoundly illiberal and anti-democratic policies. It justified departures from liberal democratic state structures and allowed legitimised the violation of individuals’ rights by the state.
3.2. The New Notion of National Security in South Africa

This section investigates contemporary ascendance of the NNS in South Africa.

It begins with an examination of the NNS's rise to prominence within South African politics, focusing first on its adoption within the ANC and then on its formal endorsement as government policy through the 1996 White Paper on Defence. The parliamentary debate on this White Paper indicates that the NNS rhetoric has been widely accepted within the South African body politic.

Having traced the rise of the NNS in South Africa, we review the contents of the framework thus established, centring in particular on four issues which have been promoted as national security concerns within it: poverty and economic underdevelopment, crime, migration, and - with less success - environmental degradation. Finally, we examine whether the NNS proposed for South Africa follows the Southern or the Western model, i.e. whether it views security threats as primarily national or transnational.

The aim of this section is to describe the NNS in South Africa. The evaluation of whether its adoption presents any dangers to South Africa's incipient liberal democracy occurs in the next chapter.

3.2.1. The Rise of the New Notion of National Security in South Africa

No single political actor has been as influential in the choice of South Africa's national security paradigm as the ANC. One of the ironies of South African politics is that the party that criticised the ONS most vocally and whose members were targeted under Total/Revolutionary Onslaught theory has been instrumental in promoting the ascendance of the NNS in South Africa. This section therefore begins by tracing the adoption of the NNS within the ANC. However, the ANC's political dominance alone does not explain the ascendancy of the framework in South African politics. The second half of this section examines the debate around two key documents, the South African Constitution and the 1996 White Paper on Defence, to reveal that ANC dominance is not a sufficient explanation for the NNS's dominance.

3.2.1.1. The ANC and the New Notion of National Security

The ANC's endorsement of the NNS is clear from the report made by Commission 4 at the Constitutional Policy Conference in 1995:

"Security is an all-encompassing and holistic concept that enables people to live in peace and harmony, enjoy equal access to resources as well as to transform and develop their lives. The objective of national security shall go beyond achieving an absence of war and physical violence to include the consolidation of democracy, respect for human rights, social justice, sustainable
economics [sic] development and protection of the environment. Threats to security shall not be interpreted as being limited to external military aggression alone but shall include poverty, social injustice, economic deprivation, abuse of human rights and disjunction of the environment.” (ANC 1995, 9)

This endorsement of the NNS had two main sources:

The first source was the ANC’s comprehensive rejection of the previous regime’s conceptualisation of ‘national security’. The ANC, of course, accepted Total/Revolutionary Onslaught’s depiction of the ANC as a minion of the Soviet Union threatening to plunge South Africa into chaos and disorder. It always portrayed itself as a responsible political organisation committed to the high principles of the Freedom Charter. Yet the ANC’s present rejection of South Africa’s ONS goes beyond this claim. On the one hand, it points out that the very notion of a Communist onslaught, whatever its foundation in the past, has certainly lost all credibility since the end of the Cold War. On the other hand, it argues powerfully that the ONS framework was always deeply flawed in two key respects: First, despite Total/Revolutionary Onslaught’s inclusivist rhetoric, ‘national security’ in the 1980s encompassed the interests and security of only a minority of the South African population. “The goal of security policy under apartheid was to maintain the system of minority rule…” (Modise 1995, 4)95. Second, ‘national security’ “was pursued through extensive use of military and police force” which cost thousands of lives and meant that “society became highly militarised [and] the Defence Force was drawn into all spheres of life…” (Modise 1995, 4)96.

This highly negative assessment of the ONS paved the way for the ANC’s affirmation of the NNS by convincing its cadres that “a fundamentally different approach [to national security] is required in a democracy” (Modise 1995, 4). However, rejection of the ONS does not necessarily entail adoption of the NNS. Thus the second source of the ANC’s endorsement of the NNS was a more positive process in which the ANC accepted the NNS’s propositions as both morally convincing and politically beneficial:

At the moral or philosophical level, a key influence on ANC security thinking was the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Co-operation in Africa (CSSDCA) held in Kampala in 199117. The conference endorsed the NNS: “the CSSDCA initiative [made] a point of distinguishing between the security of people and states. The former is understood to derive from satisfaction of social, cultural, economic, political and human rights needs, and to be an essential precondition of the latter.” (Nathan 1992, 16). The theoretical and moral arguments for this position aired at the CSSDCA, and mediated and promoted within the ANC principally by Laurie Nathan, helped persuade ANC officials to similarly endorse the NNS.

In addition, however, endorsement of the NNS also had practical political benefits. First, because the notion promises a focus on human needs and security, it was likely to be popular among voters. A second,

95 This clause of the Draft White Paper on Defence (June 1995) was not included in the final White Paper for obvious political reasons. It nevertheless captures the position of the ANC on this subject.
96 As L. Nathan succinctly put it, “The net results of Pretoria’s security policy were devastating” (Nathan 1994, 11).
perhaps even more important consideration, was budgetary. In the 1980s, South African defence expenditure had risen dramatically both in real terms and as percentage of GDP. In 1993, it was still high at $3,911 million (Beri 1996, 65). The ANC, however, won the 1994 election on an economic development and social upliftment plank, encapsulated in the ambitious Reconstruction and Development Programme. To even attempt to live up to voter expectations, the ANC would need to reallocate funds away from military defence. The military’s ‘weapon’ against these reallocations would be the claim that lack of funds would endanger the provision of national security. This claim could be countered, however, if national security was redefined to include non-military threats. The reallocation of funds from the military to poverty relief, for example, would not detract from national security, merely emphasise a different aspect of national security.

The NNS, then, had a dual appeal for the ANC: not only did it provide an ethically more acceptable alternative to the discredited apartheid national security paradigm, but it also carried political benefits, given the kind of appeal the ANC had cultivated and the goals it had committed itself to.

3.2.1.2. The NNS in Ascendancy in Contemporary South African Politics

The ANC’s resounding victory in the 1994 elections significantly contributed to the present ascendancy of the NNS in South Africa. However, the ANC’s political dominance did not automatically lead to an endorsement of the new framework in all matters. Most importantly, the NNS was not included in South Africa’s Constitution. It was, however, enshrined in the 1996 White Paper on National Defence. Examining the process by which the NNS prevailed in the White Paper reveals that in addition to the ANC’s political dominance, the fact that proponents of the NNS have captured the moral high ground in the debate around national security helps explain the notion’s ascendancy in contemporary South African political life.

3.2.1.2.1. Non-Endorsement of the NNS in the Constitution

One essential debate in which the NNS did not prevail entirely - despite initial ANC resistance - was the constitutional one. The final Constitution simply declares that “National security must reflect the resolve of South Africans, as individuals and as a nation, to live as equals, to live in peace and harmony, to be free from fear and want and to seek a better life” [South Africa, 1996, chapter 11, clause 198]. Although it concords with the NNS by emphasising the security of people rather than of the state - and notes that the interests of all South Africans are to be taken into account - this clause stops short of a full endorsement of the NNS. It is essentially about procedure rather than content: any definition of national security that allows citizens to live

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78 Indeed, this warning has since been sounded by Ronnie Kasrils: (Kasrils 1995, 4-5).
freely, equally, and peacefully is constitutional, while any formulation that impedes this aim is barred. Rather than endorsing, once and for all, a particular notion of national security and thereby risking that it eventually be used for illiberal or anti-democratic purposes, the constitution simply sets up the criteria for which national security paradigms can lawfully be adopted.

The wording of the clause was a matter of intense contention for precisely this reason. The ANC, as mentioned above, favoured much more decisive endorsement of the NNS:

"The Constitution should state as Preamble to the Security Section [that]... Security is an all-encompassing and holistic concept... The objective of national security shall... include the consolidation of democracy, respect for human rights, social justice, sustainable economics development [sic] and protection of the environment." (ANC 1995, 9).

Opponents of this wording argued that the constitution should not create an open mandate for government intervention in society by defining these social issues as national security concerns. The constitution should reflect a concern with the well-being of the population as central to national security matters, but without thereby creating a direct entitlement for state agencies to intervene to ‘safeguard’, ‘create’, or - worse - ‘enforce’ this well-being. As the wording of the final constitution indicates, this argument prevailed in the constitutional debate. Because South Africans are attributed above all a resolve to live “free from fear”, any measures that threaten individuals’ rights and thus cause fear are declared unconstitutional. They cannot be justified, even by reference to national security.

Thus in this important debate the ANC’s opinion did not prevail, despite the party’s political dominance. It thus appears that the ANC’s dominance alone cannot explain the ascendancy of the NNS in contemporary South African politics. This is confirmed by an investigation of the process by which the NNS did eventually become enshrined in South African law.

3.2.1.2.2. Endorsement of the NNS in the 1996 White Paper on National Defence

The NNS has made a remarkable ‘comeback’ in South Africa by being firmly endorsed in the 1996 White Paper on National Defence. The White Paper begins by positioning itself firmly within the post-apartheid era - “This White Paper has been prepared in the spirit of the new democratic era in South Africa. It acknowledges as its point of departures the profound political and strategic consequences of the ending of apartheid”. Having thus set the scene for a revision of the national security paradigm, it proceeds in Chapter 2 to affirm the NNS:

“In the new South Africa national security is no longer viewed as a predominantly military and police problem. It has been broadened to incorporate political, economic, society and environmental matters. At the heart of this new approach is a paramount concern with the security of people.” (Modise 1996, chapter 2 clause 1).

* I owe this account to a presentation by Prof. A. Seegers during her Conflict in World Politics graduate seminar at the University of Cape Town on 16 September 1997.
The paper then spells out the more specific issues national security therefore comprises: "At the national level, the objectives of security policy therefore encompass the consolidation of democracy; the achievement of social justice, economic development, and a safe environment; and a substantial reduction in the level of crime, violence and instability." (Modise 1996, chapter 2 clause 3). The White Paper thus clearly, consciously and unequivocally endorses a version of the NNS.

Although the wording of the document often implies that it is only reiterating already formulated policy, the White Paper is in fact the first formal enshrinement of the NNS in a South African government document. Its constitutionality is therefore questionable, since the power of formulating national security policy lies with Parliament, not the Department of Defence. Despite this, and despite the very recent argument about enshrining the NNS in the Constitution, the White Paper's affirmation of the NNS went unchallenged in the parliamentary debate on its acceptance. Early in the debate, T.S. Yengeni, chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Defence, remarked: “The Deputy Minister has pointed out that he is looking forward to the debate. I want to submit, with respect, that there is no debate... This White Paper captures and is informed by the letter and spirit of the new democratic era in South Africa.” He was mistaken if his assertion was that there would be no debate at all: specific points in the Paper were challenged by opposition members. He was right, however, in implying that there would be no debate on fundamentals: none of the speakers, regardless of their party affiliation, questioned the NNS paradigm that is set out at the beginning of the document and which pervades subsequent clauses.

This indicates that the acceptance of the NNS as paradigm for government policy did not result simply from ANC political dominance, but that another process was also at work: proponents of the NNS had captured the moral high ground. Endorsement of the NNS proved hard - politically almost impossible - to contest, not because of the ANC's numerical dominance but because of the symbolic and moral significance the NNS acquired. After the abuses of the 1980s, the end of the Cold War, and especially the transformation of the South African system, it was not politically (never mind morally) feasible to defend the ONS. But there was remarkably little debate on what should be put in its place, for two main reasons. First, by identifying the NNS with 'the new democratic South Africa', the ANC effectively made the acceptance of the NNS a demonstration of loyalty to the new system as a whole - and none of the parliamentarians seemed willing to risk charges of disloyalty by challenging its validity. Second, with the newly enfranchised majority suffering poverty and deprivation, objecting to making social and economic issues national security priorities invites charges of not caring for 'the people' and thus is a political risk close to political suicide.

In the absence of any serious military threat from abroad, only the NNS seems likely to be politically acceptable in South Africa in the near future. This is not merely due to the dominant ANC's endorsement of

100 The transcription of this debate can be found in Hansard, Debates of the National Assembly, No.5, 3rd Session, 1st Parliament, 9-17 May 1996 (The Government Printer, Cape Town, 1996), columns 970-1137.
the paradigm. The notion's proponents have also captured the moral high ground. In state circles, the NNS is therefore virtually unchallenged. Government and opposition alike operate within its framework and accept its rhetoric. Political debate has been largely confined to which issues constitute the most significant threats. It is to this debate that we must now turn.

3.2.2. Some Contents of the South African New Notion of National Security

This section centres on the four issues most frequently advocated as national security concerns in South Africa: poverty, crime, migration, and environmental degradation. It explores how the first three have been couched in the rhetoric of national security to occupy a central place in government priorities. Proponents of the fourth have striven for the same effect, but with less success. The reason for this lies in the political system. Van Aardt argues that "needs and threats... [are] different sides of the same coin... Neglect of needs... eventually results in threats" (van Aardt 1993, 90). However, in the context of limited resources not all needs can be recognised as national security issues. To achieve recognition as national security issue, a concern must not only be shown to be relevant to South Africa: the case must be made that it actually poses a significant threat to South African national security. Furthermore, there is a ranking issue even among national security threats. While the issues proposed as threats are not mutually exclusive, proponents of each issue compete for scarce government resources to be allocated to address their concerns. This competition produces a tendency is towards dramatic rhetoric and hyperbole even within the vocabulary of national security - a tendency discernible in the discourses on each of the four issues. To be elevated to the status of a national security threat, an issue must be perceived as a matter of urgency which adversely affects a large section of the population and which it has not been possible to resolve by ordinary measures.

3.2.2.1. Poverty and Economic Development

Poverty was among the very first issues to be raised as national security threat under the new national security framework. It is mentioned both in the 1996 Defence White Paper (chapter 2 clause 5) and in the ANC’s original proposal for the constitution (commission 4 report A.2.1). Indeed, it is almost universally

Note that this is not entirely the case in academic circles. Note also that at the constitutional conference, opposition to the NNS also largely came from within the academic community - which has much less direct influence in other forums.

For example, both environmental degradation and crime can be argued to constitute national security threats in South Africa.
accepted as a major national security threat by those who adopt the NNS in South Africa, both because of the vastness of the issue and the political risk in denying it national security status.\textsuperscript{103}

Apartheid left a large section of South Africa’s population living in poverty, with poor housing, often inadequate food supply, and little or no access to education, employment, or medical services. The squalor of the townships - even more so the ‘squatter camps’ or ‘informal settlements’ - speaks volumes. But how is the fact of poverty linked with national security? Two kinds of arguments are made:

The first portrays poverty as an immediate threat to a multitude of South Africans - more directly relevant and more keenly felt than any threat presently posed by foreign enemies. Poverty is life threatening: hunger and poor housing weaken a person’s resistance to disease, lack of funds makes medical services and medicine inaccessible. Poverty diminishes quality of life by restricting an individual’s opportunities. It creates personal insecurity. It may also push individuals towards drugs, prostitution, crime, and gang warfare, endangering their lives. In short, poverty endangers so many South Africans as individuals that under the population-centred NNS it should be understood to be a national security threat. An objection to this argument, however, is that the aggregate individual insecurity of a section of the population - even a majority - does not \textit{eo ipso} constitute a national security issue.

The second line of argument therefore stresses the repercussions of poverty on society as a whole, presenting poverty as a truly national security threat. President Mandela has declared: “without a better life for all, any hope of national security would be a pipe-dream. Our own history has confirmed that none can enjoy long-term security while a majority are being denied the basic amenities of life” (Mandela 1997). Poverty, especially when coupled with large socio-economic inequalities, breeds violence, crime, and internal unrest, possibly even bloody uprisings and revolts. It therefore threatens all South Africans, including the affluent. “If the various sections of the population cannot be lifted out of the swamp of destitution and economic despair, there is no chance that the country’s internal problems will ever be solved” (Otto 1995).

How poverty is to be overcome, of course, is controversial.\textsuperscript{104} Very few, however, deny the urgency of finding a solution to this problem which affects a huge section of South Africa’s population. Most politicians therefore accept that the search for economic development and the eradication of poverty is a national security - indeed a national survival - issue. As the White Paper on Reconstruction and Development states: “No political democracy can survive and flourish if a majority of its people remain in poverty” (South

\textsuperscript{103}Interestingly, a statement by Mbeki to the Sunday Independent in 1997 admiring the ‘patience’ of South Africans living in townships caused a barrage of criticism that he was not taking the issue of poverty seriously enough - as if denying that the matter was a national security threat meant denying the importance of the matter altogether.

\textsuperscript{104}Widespread consensus does exist that a solution must pass via economic development rather than simple redistribution of existing resources, but opinions on how this development can best be achieved vary radically. The ANC backs a neoliberal economic policy - GEAR, which the SACP rejects as far too right wing. Ambert interestingly contrasts traditional development approaches by the IMF and the World Bank with alternatives proposed by France, Sweden and the UNDP, arguing that the former may well decrease rather than augment security by aggravating poverty in the short- to medium term (Ambert 1997).
African Parliament, 1994, clause 1.2.7). The issue has thus firmly established its place within the South African NNS framework.

3.2.2.2. Crime

Crime is also frequently mentioned as a national security concern under the NNS in South Africa. Three distinct though overlapping categories of criminality can be distinguished: criminal violence in the townships, often linked to gangsterism; property crimes like car theft and break-ins which often have a violent component (‘car-jackers’ may shoot the motorist, break-ins are often accompanied by rape or murder) and tend to preoccupy more affluent citizens; and organised transnational and ‘white-collar’ crime. Crime not only affects economic development by deterring foreign investors - especially if the government is ‘weak on crime’, which can be viewed as an indicator of political instability - but also has domestic repercussions in insecurity and fear: “Apart from the immediate horror of its most violent manifestations, the effects of crime are local and insidious… crime’s most devastating effects its influence on the perceptions of South Africa’s own citizens” (Besdiek 1996, 6). Failure to address crime has led to the rise of vigilante groups - most notably PAGAD in the Western Cape - which fuel violence and insecurity among the population.

Although the various parties tend to be preoccupied with different kinds of crime - the NP stressing violent property crimes, the ANC more preoccupied with violence in the townships - cross-partisan consensus exists that crime in one form or another is a national security threat. Mandela has referred to lax attitudes towards crime as “plainly and simply a threat to national security” (Mandela 1997). Some even propose that crime is the most significant national security threat in contemporary South Africa: MP Green has declared “The White Paper on Defence speaks of nation-building, democracy and the RDP. These are all good and well, but the listing of priorities is also vital. First and foremost on the list must be the issue of crime, which has become South Africa’s number one national security problem.”

The ‘crusaders against crime’ have adroitly availed themselves of the NNS framework and language to push their concerns. The language in which discussion of the issue is couched is remarkable for its dramatic vehemence and militaristic overtones. Consider, for example, the Parliamentary debate on the Draft White Paper on Safety and Security of May 31 1996. The Minister for Safety and Security began the debate stating that “Crime has become a common enemy of all citizens in South Africa, so it is not an overstatement to say that we are fighting a war against crime”.

107 For a fuller exposition of this argument, see (Besdiek 1996)
109 Hansard, No.5, 3rd Session, 1st Parliament, 27/5 - 4/6 1996 (The Government Printer, Cape Town), column 1857
crime when he is not prepared to shoot in that war.” Fourie was speaking figuratively, advocating not literally shooting criminals but taking a ‘firmer’ approach to crime modelled on the recent experiences in New York referred to as the ‘Broken Windows Policy’. Nevertheless it is remarkable that the language used to describe crime is highly militaristic. It reflects a growing frustration at the failure of current attempts to curb crime and a desire to resort to exceptional measures since ordinary ones appear to have failed.

Crime has thus clearly become classified as a national security issue in South Africa. In its different forms, it affects all segments of South Africa’s population, and frustration with the inability of current efforts to stem the crime wave has led to increasingly strong rhetoric on the subject. Even Mandela has declared that “we must take the war to the criminals”. Crime has come to be viewed as a security issue against which strong measures should – indeed must – be taken.

3.2.2.3. Migration

There has been a deluge of complaints against illegal migration into South Africa since 1994. As with poverty and crime, the case against migration has been couched in the language of national security. The threat illegal immigrants allegedly pose to the host country is both economic and social. On the one hand, “the economic implications to the host country of a large illegal immigrant population are potentially disastrous” (Solomon and Cilliers 1996, 8): the immigrants are held to compete with South African nationals on the job market and to undercut wages, while adding to already significant unemployment problems, thus contributing to the ‘poverty threat’ sketched out above. They also compete for already scarce housing and want to utilise medical and educational facilities. Therefore, the argument goes, they are already a serious economic burden to the state. To reinforce this somewhat tenuous position, proponents of envisioning illegal immigration a national security threat fall back on a series of social arguments. They draw on theories developed recently in Western Europe that large-scale immigration causes social tensions, the argument being that economic competition spills over in the social sphere into xenophobia and the formation of rival gangs (Vale 1996). In addition, they link illegal immigration to crime, notably gun-smuggling and organised car-theft, as well as property crimes. Finally, the South African discourse on immigration has come to focus on disease: for MP Groenewald, for example, illegal immigrants not only compete “with our own workers and unemployed labourers in their search for jobs” and are often “undesirable aliens”, but in addition “some are carriers of serious diseases like AIDS”. Solomon and Cilliers concur that there are “serious health risks associated with illegal immigration”, and list AIDS, cholera, and malaria in particular (Solomon and Cilliers 1996, 9).

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108 Ibid. column 1865
109 Hansard, No.5, 3rd Session, 1st Parliament, 9-17 May 1996 (The Government Printer, Cape Town), column 1125
In sum, then, it is argued that "the presence of such large concentrations of undocumented migrants holds a serious threat to the stability of the South African state and adversely affects the quality of life of ordinary South Africans." (Solomon 1996, 60). That these propositions are highly generalised, frequently poorly supported by facts or figures, and often border on xenophobia (Vale 1996) is both true and beside the point in this context. Whatever the accuracy of these assertions, their proponents have at least partially succeeded in utilising the space created under the NNS to promote their demands for tighter measures against immigration. They have exploited the xenophobia that immigration has inspired as well as the fear that these immigrants might aggravate the already serious job scarcity. This has led to calls for tough countermeasures. Suggestions of reviving the infamous 'Snake' on the South African/Mozambican border have been tabled in government, and Home Affairs Minister Buthelezi has called for a 'US-style' handling of the border situation, referring to the heavily patrolled US/Mexican border.

Immigration has thus been put on the government agenda as a national security threat threatening the welfare of South Africans. Xenophobia and economic competition have mingled to escalate demands for a 'firm' response to this threat. "While there should be concern over the welfare of human beings everywhere, does the South African state not owe a greater moral debt to its own citizens, many of whom are homeless, unemployed and illiterate?" (Solomon 1996, 62).

3.2.2.4. Environment

A fourth issue area that has sometimes been included in the South African national security debate is the environment. Most environmentalists argue that in the long run "the maintenance of the local and planetary biosphere [is] the essential support on which all other human enterprises depend" (Buzan, quoted in van Aardt 1993, 92). Their success in South Africa - as elsewhere - has been somewhat limited, however, precisely because of this long-term focus. Van Aardt identifies the issue: "a security threat is identified by the immediacy of the problem; therefore only issues arising from short-term threats merit security status" (van Aardt 1993, 86). She objects that this perspective is short-sighted and erroneous: "most of the threats facing southern Africa are of long-term nature" (van Aardt 1993, 87), and neglecting to 'care' for the environment now will later cause serious and avoidable problems of human survival (van Aardt 1993, 82). While this may be so, in the context of limited resources the political reality is that in order to use the NNS to further a particular cause, one must be demonstrate the existence of an immediate threat that urgently requires government attention and funds. With the pressing demands of poverty and crime to be dealt with, and the migration issue now tabled, the South African government will at best be able to make half-hearted efforts towards the long-term preservation of the environment.

A second tactic has been more successful in prioritising environmental issues on the government agenda: the isolation of particular environment issues which can be shown to have an immediate effect on popular -
and therefore national - security. Thus while the 1996 White Paper for Defence, for example, does not mention the preservation of the environment as a national security concern, it does include “inhabit[ing] an environment which is not detrimental to [one’s] health and well-being” (Modise 1996, chapter 2, clause 2) in its definition of citizens’ security. Where environmental issues can thus be shown to present immediate health or welfare risks, the NNS framework can be used to further environmentalist aims. This stops well short of the full environmentalist programme, however.

Thus because of the long-term nature of the issues they deal with, environmentalists have found themselves unable to harness the NNS for their purposes as effectively as others who point to more immediate short-term threats. Although environmental degradation may affect a large section of the South African population in the long run, it has not generated a sense of urgency among the population, and no convincing argument has been made that it must be addressed by exceptional measures. Thus environmental matters have been only weak contenders for recognition as national security concerns.

3.2.2.5. Conclusion

The NNS provides for the deepening of the concept of national security to focus on popular rather than state security, and its broadening to include non-military threats to this security. In South Africa, the issues that have been most successful at occupying the space thus provided have been underdevelopment, poverty, crime, and migration. Each of these concerns affects a considerable section of the South African population. They result – or, in the case of migration, are feared to result – in immediate and substantial harm to South African citizens and are therefore perceived as matters of great urgency. In addition, all three issues have proved immune to resolution by ‘ordinary’ measures. Advocates of their urgency have therefore availed themselves of the language of national security to demand exceptional national efforts against them.

Urgency, frustration, and relevance to large numbers of citizens thus seem necessary for an issue to be ‘promoted’ to a national security threat. The contrast provided by the environmental debate is instructive in highlighting the constraints on the promotion of issues within the NNS framework. Even if they may eventually affect the well being of the entire population, long-term issues seem substantially less likely to achieve recognition as national security threats than immediate dangers. They cannot inspire the sense that something must be done as a matter of urgency, even if there is no consensus on what the appropriate remedy might be.
3.2.3. Conclusion

The New Notion of National Security is in ascendancy in South Africa. It has the support of the ANC leadership and has become pervasive and dominant in the contemporary political discourse on security matters. Government and Opposition alike espouse its rhetoric. While not enshrined in the Constitution, the notion has been formally promulgated. In particular, it is encapsulated within the 1996 White Paper on Defence.

The primary issues presently advocated as threats within the NNS framework in South Africa are poverty and economic underdevelopment, crime, and illegal immigration. These issues are urgent, relevant to a significant section of South Africa’s population, and appear to resist resolution by ordinary measures. Those within and outside government who seek their resolution have thus been able to use the language of national security to achieve their prioritisation on the national agenda. These issues have now assumed an aura of emergency and urgent demand for action which can be deconstructed or countered only with difficulty.

Addressing these ‘threats’ is seen to require primarily national rather than transnational efforts. Some regionalists have opposed this trend, arguing that “states are no longer capable of protecting their citizens unilaterally” (Vale 1996, 15). They have made this claim not only with respect to traditional military threats but also in regard to the issues highlighted under the South African NNS. Thus they pointed out that migration is an intrinsically transnational phenomenon and that environmental issues, too, have transnational dimensions: “if the region is to move towards a sustainable and prosperous future, it must move together. For eco-systems respect no political boundaries...” (Swatuk 1996, 30). Crime also has international dimensions: on the one hand, internationally organised crime has increased in South Africa (Vale 1996, 14) and on the other hand, the violence of crime in South Africa has been fuelled by the regional small arms proliferation (Beri 1996, 67). Even economic development can be viewed as a transnational issue: Peter Vale, for example, argues that the Southern African region is effectively a single economic unit in which long-term economic prosperity can only be achieved through economic co-operation (Vale 1996). In sum, the regionalist claim is that in the long term, security can only be pursued at the regional level: the pursuit of purely national security is quixotic.

Although they occasionally resort to regionalist rhetoric, however, most South African policymakers have resisted the regionalist logic. They assert that although crime, underdevelopment, and illegal

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111 “Many of the domestic threats to states are shared problems and impact negatively on the stability of surrounding countries. In addition, since the subcontinent is volatile and its national and regional institutions are weak, internal conflicts could easily give rise to cross-border tensions.” (Nathan 1994, 49).

112 For example, the 1996 White Paper on Defence contains a section on “The Regional Context” of national security which acknowledges transnational threats, the problem of regional volatility, and the need for regional co-operation and confidence-building measures to address these issues (Modise 1996, chapter 4, section 2, clauses 7-29). Clause 12 explicitly states that “Following trends in other parts of the world, South Africa will encourage the development of a multilateral ‘common security’ approach in Southern Africa”. In addition, the economic dimension of regionalism, has long been part of ANC rhetoric, and was enshrined in its
immigration have transnational dimensions, they can be adequately addressed at the national level or through bilateral arrangements. South African policymakers have, for example, shunned regional economic development efforts, arguing that these would interfere with domestic economic development. “South Africa has not delivered on its undertakings to strengthen the economy of its neighbours. Instead, as its relations with Zimbabwe suggest, it is thwarting efforts to strengthen regional industrial capacity” (Vale 1996, 12). More generally, the government has adopted and defends a clear ‘South Africa first’ programme. It sees its first obligation as being to its own people, and believes that it can fulfil this obligation without resorting to regionalism – indeed that regionalism would divert resources away from combating domestic threats. Therefore “efforts to reposition SADC... have been hampered by South Africa’s nervousness to be drawn too closely into a regional scheme over which the country has no immediate control. ...the new South Africa is as unwilling a regional partner as was the old South Africa” (Vale 1996, 381).

Rather than adopting the Western version of the NNS with its emphasis on regional cooperation to address transnational threats, South Africa has thus espoused a Southern variation of the NNS and remains committed to an internalised, nationalist focus on national security.

3.3. CONCLUSION

The notion of national security is relevant both to understanding South Africa’s past and to the study of its contemporary politics.

The adoption of the ONS in the form of first Total and then Revolutionary Onslaught theory helps explain crucial developments in South African history. These include the rise of the NSMS and the empowerment of the South African military and executive within this system, the delegitimation of political opposition to the government, and the escalating violence perpetrated by state ‘security forces’ from the mid-1970s onwards. Although the ONS did not directly cause these developments, it provided enabling conditions for them by providing a framework within which they could be legitimised. Thus the ONS contributed to serious infractions of such core liberal democratic principles as the limited state, civil supremacy, the separation of powers, and the inviolability of individuals’ rights.

However, South Africa has followed the global trend of seeking to reform the notion of national security rather than abandoning it. It has deepened the concept to focus on the security of the South African population rather than the state. However, it has not extended this deepening outwards to also include

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Reconstruction and Development Programme: “In the long run, sustainable reconstruction and development in South Africa requires sustainable reconstruction and development in Southern Africa as a whole” (Nathan 1994 30-31).

11 South Africa has recently concluded such agreements with Mozambique, Lesotho, and Angola. For details, see (Vale 1996, 379)
regional security: instead, South Africa seeks internal, nationalistic responses to the national security threats it identifies, adopting a Southern rather than Western version of the NNS. Since South Africa has also sought to broaden the notion of national security, the range of threats considered relevant to national security has expanded. Attention has most notably focussed on poverty and economic underdevelopment, crime, and illegal immigration. Advocates of the importance of these concerns have successfully cloaked them in the language of national security by stressing their urgency, widespread relevance to the South African population, and resistance to remedy by ordinary measures. By promoting these issues to national security concerns, advocates have ensured their prioritisation on the government agenda.

This version of the NNS currently dominates in South African political discourse. Advocated by the main political player of the moment - the ANC - it has also captured the moral high ground in contemporary thinking. Against the backdrop of the abuses of the apartheid regime and the pervasive social and economic problems which are the legacy of the old system to the new democracy, it has become exceedingly difficult not to espouse NNS rhetoric. Politicians are wary of challenging the notion for fear of standing out as either hankering back to the old regime or as not being sufficiently interested in the plight of the newly enfranchised majority.

The crucial question now is whether the adoption of the NNS in South Africa is compatible with the country’s recent commitment to liberal democracy. This will be examined in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 4:
THE NEW NOTION OF NATIONAL SECURITY AND LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

My contention in this chapter is that despite the significant changes that the notion of national security has undergone in the last decade, it remains a dangerous concept for liberal democracies.

This argument is developed in two sections, reflecting the two levels at which the concept of national security has historically been in conflict with liberal democracy. The first section concerns political institutions, the second focuses on the societal level. Each section begins with a summary of past experience of conflict between liberal democracy and the notion of 'national security'. At the political institutional level, appeals to 'national security' have legitimised a concentration of power within the executive and empowered the military, which stands in opposition to the liberal democratic insistence on a weak, divided state. At the societal level, liberal democrats stress the need to respect the civil and human rights of the free and equal individual, while the notion of national security has served to legitimise the violation of these rights. Each section then investigates the contention that the NNS has been so profoundly reformed that it cannot have the same legitimising effects as the ONS. It first describes the arguments made to this effect by proponents of the NNS and then draws on both analytical arguments and historical evidence to highlight their deficiencies.

The chapter concludes that the discourse of national security remains fundamentally at odds with the norms of liberal democracy. Therefore the adoption of the NNS in South Africa conflicts with the country's recent commitment to liberal democracy.

4.1. The Political Institutional Level

As we have seen in Chapter 1, liberal democracies are characterised by a relatively weak, fragmented state that is divided against itself by the separation of powers. None of the three branches of government is given pre-eminence over the others. Nor does any outside body - and certainly not the military - exercise control over the government or national policy-making.

Historically, the notion of 'national security' has been used to legitimise executive and military empowerment. In the West, national security justified executive discretion around major policy issues. In South Africa, it also enabled the military to participate in government, while in Latin America it legitimised military rule. Proponents of the NNS argue that such abridgements of the democratic process cannot be legitimised under the NNS. They contend that, given the kinds of threat the NNS centres on, the scope it provides for 'legitimate' executive discretion is limited, while military take-overs are simply unjustifiable.

Empirically, however, executive discretion has persisted because although structural threats may seem objective their recognition as national security issues remains a political choice. In addition, Latin American
history teaches us that far from rendering military take-overs impossible, positing structural threats can actually serve to legitimate long-term military rule. In theoretical terms, the fundamental problem is that liberal democracy is essentially procedural, while the term ‘national security’ implies goal-orientation.

4.1.1. The Effects of the ONS

As we have seen in the previous two chapters, the notion of ‘national security’ has historically had two main kinds of impact at the political/institutional level: it has empowered the executive and facilitated military intervention in policy-making and government. Here, we draw together the main characteristics of these processes.

4.1.1.1. Executive Empowerment

Executive empowerment under invocation of ‘national security’ existed at various levels in the West, in South Africa, and in Latin America before the advent of military rule. At the heart of its legitimation was the idea that, in the interest of efficiency, state power should be centralised in times of national crisis and war. Even democrats agree that democracies’ cumbersome decision-making processes are ill suited to emergencies, and most democratic constitutions therefore include provisions for extensive emergency powers to the executive. Democracies should not be forced to defend themselves “with one hand tied behind its back” (Segal 1994, 375). However, as argued in Chapter 2, during the Cold War the ONS vastly expanded the concept of ‘war’ to include an extended ideological conflict carried out mostly by non-conventional and even non-military means. The possibility of invoking the ‘logic of war’ to justify executive discretion was thus no longer limited to moments of acute, demonstrable military crisis. Executive empowerment in the name of ‘national security’ became routine rather exceptional. It was enhanced by three main factors:

First, ‘national security’ justified secrecy. In the West, secrecy mainly shrouded military matters, including especially nuclear weapons. Information on these matters was deliberately kept from both the legislature and the general population, excluding both from decision-making in this vital policy area. In South Africa, allegedly for fear of ‘sensitive information’ falling into the hands of the enemy, NSMS

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114 The partial suspension of the democratic process in times of conflict has historically been widely accepted - see (Segal 1994), (Martin 1994), and (Dandeker 1994) for examples. However, how much democracy can be sacrificed to the war effort remains controversial. Is postponing elections or suspending the habeas corpus or civic rights of speech and association legitimate during wars? When is democracy so impaired that what is left is not worth fighting for anymore?

115 See chapter 2, section 1.2.1. For more extensive accounts, see (Dandeker 1994), (Johansen 1992), (Segal 1994), and (Martin 1994).

116 As Falk observed: “the nuclear national security state has sufficiently immobilized the institutions and procedures of representative democracy to render them almost ineflectual when it comes to challenging the fundamental content and framework of official policy in the war/peace area.” (Johansen 1992, 108).
branches reported not to civilians in the traditional administrative structures but to the SSC (Seegers 1988, 14). ‘Security information’ was kept from the public through a draconian set of press regulations and censorship. It was also withheld from Parliament, because government members felt they could not trust the opposition members within it (Grundy 1986, 41). In both cases, the consequences for democracy were adverse: “Secrecy obstructs democracy by keeping the public ignorant of information that it needs to make wise policy choices... [and limiting] the ability of people to find out whether their preferences, even when clearly articulated, are being followed.” (Johansen 1992, 106, 114). For the executive, however, secrecy was empowering, because it eliminated the burden of accountability.

Second, the rhetoric of ‘national security’ facilitated co-opting and/or delegitimising the opposition. Labeling a matter as a national security issue implies that it should be beyond partisan politics. If the opposition accepts this argument, it will tend to comply with government proposals rather than critically examine them, relinquishing, in so doing, the critical role of restraining the Government that the Opposition plays in the democratic process. In the West, co-optation through national security rhetoric was largely successful: recall from chapter 2 Johansen’s remark that in the USA “the adversarial process between political parties... simply has not worked on military [national security] issues” (Johansen 1992, 102). In South Africa, as seen in the previous chapter, co-optation was not as successful. Beyond being used to seek compliance from the political opposition, the notion of national security was thus also used to delegitimise those who would not comply by depicting them as (willing or unwitting) national security threats. Whether through co-optation or delegitimation or both, then, the discourse of the ONS further diminished the check on executive power provided by a political opposition already hampered by lack of information.

Finally, the executive gained an added degree of freedom because, as Wolfers discerned, national security in the Cold War era was an ‘ambiguous symbol’. Because ‘national security’ was held to require the protection of national interests and values both at home and abroad, almost any issue could be elevated to a national security concern by using the appropriate alarmist rhetoric. And such rhetoric could not easily be countered by ‘objective’ threat assessments because attacks on interests and values were presumed to employ non-military or non-conventional military means, neither of which are easily observable. Therefore the executive could manipulate which issues it would be given ‘emergency’ powers on. It could also influence perceptions of the length of a particular crisis. This ability, a result of the covert nature of conflict and the protracted nature of Cold War itself, impeded ratification, the traditional democratic mechanism to limit executive empowerment in crisis situations. Ratification requires the executive to give full account of (and thus face popular sanction for) its use of emergency powers once the crisis has passed. But as long as the Cold War continued, the ‘right’ time for holding leaders accountable never seemed to arrive, while the covert nature of operations also made leaders’ actions hard to discern and therefore judge.

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117 See chapter 1
118 See chapter 2, section 1.2.1.
4.1.1.2. Military Empowerment

In all of the countries examined in the previous two chapters, the role and prestige of the military was enhanced by the adoption of the ONS. This empowerment took two main forms:

The first was military empowerment within the framework of a formally democratic state. In the USA, this kind of empowerment benefited both the "nuclear priesthood" (Johansen 1992, 102) who shaped crucial decisions on nuclear issues and the intelligence services, whose domestic and external role was expanded because of the non-conventional manner in which the Cold War was conducted\(^{119}\). In South Africa, both the intelligence services and, to a lesser extent, the SADF benefited from the creation of the NSMS, which was legitimised by Total Onslaught theory. The empowerment of security forces to operate independently or contribute to the formulation of policy runs counter to the liberal democratic principle that the security forces should simply be instruments available to the government whose deployment is decided by Parliament.

The second form of military empowerment is military rule outside any democratic framework. This was facilitated in Latin America because the adoption of an internalised ONS by civilian governments, which destroyed two major barriers upholding civil supremacy. First, the domestic deployment of the military justified under the internalised ONS politicised the military, encouraging soldiers to judge the performance of the civilian rulers they had hitherto obeyed implicitly\(^{120}\). Second, the adoption of the ONS changed the standards by which these rulers could be judged. The ONS elevated 'national security' above 'democracy': as Pinochet declared, "national security [became] both a state objective and its guiding rationale" (Lopez 1986, 77). Any government that did not provide national security, even if duly elected, was illegitimate. Conversely, any government that enhanced national security was legitimate. The military was thus no longer barred \textit{ex ante} from forming a legitimate government. Indeed, if the civilian government failed in its task, it was the military's duty to step in. In Argentina, Peru, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay, this is precisely what happened. Arguing that not just the democratic process but the democratic state structure itself was an unaffordable luxury in the war against Communism, the militaries of these countries seized power for themselves. They proceeded to eliminate all the 'impediments' posed by democratic structures, suspending the constitution, dissolving or subordinating government and parliament, and ruling by decree and force. All this was done in the name of national security: tellingly, in Uruguay the body which concentrated state power in military hands was called \textit{Consejo de Seguridad Nacional} - Council of National Security (Munck 1989, 60).

\(^{119}\) See chapter 2, section 1.2.1.

\(^{120}\) See (Perelli 1993), (Finer 1962), and (Saba 1987) for examples of the extensive collusion between Latin American civilian elites and 'their' militaries prior to the 1960s and 1970s.
4.1.2. Arguments for Why the NNS Cannot Legitimise Similar Policies

Proponents of the NNS may argue that pointing to past abuses of the notion of national security is unnecessarily alarmist. These abuses occurred under the ONS, not the NNS. In order to champion the NNS among democrats, however, they must also argue that the new version of 'national security' they are defending does not lend itself to similar abuses. This section examines the most convincing among these arguments.

4.1.2.1. Executive Empowerment

Proponents of the NNS argue that the issues highlighted by the NNS cannot generate the anti-democratic consequences observed under the ONS because they cannot justify secrecy, are unlikely to allow extensive co-optation or delegitimation of the political opposition, and lack the ambiguity of the Cold War concept of national security.

4.1.2.1.1. Less Scope for Secrecy

Proponents of the NNS acknowledge the need for transparency in liberal democracies: Laurie Nathan, for example, insists that in a democracy “national security policies [must] be sufficiently transparent to enable meaningful parliamentary and public scrutiny and debate” (Nathan 1994, 5). They argue that the NNS poses no threat to this transparency:

First, the NNS positively discourages the secrecy surrounding military affairs justified and encouraged under the ONS. It does so by de-emphasising the military dimensions of national security in favour of the social and economic ones. Military secrecy has thus become much more difficult to legitimise: “The relevance of [security classifications on military information] is increasingly being questioned in the post-Cold War period” (Sendall 1995, 33). Demands for parliamentary oversight over military affairs have also gained momentum. The 1996 South African constitution, for example, enshrines the right of multi-party parliamentary committees to oversee the activities of the security services (chapter 11, clause 199(8)).

Second, according to its proponents the issues that the NNS highlights as national security concerns do not call for secrecy. Buzan, for example, argues that “while the military dimension of security traditionally demands, and gets, a considerable measure of secrecy, the economic and political dimensions are usually more open to debate” (Buzan 1983, 257). This statement would provide only a weak foundation for endorsing the NNS if it referred simply to a general tradition of public debate in economic and social domains. This democratic ‘tradition’ exists mostly in the West, and is flawed or non-existent in much of the former Soviet bloc and the developing world. In addition, experience cautions against overconfidence in the
strength of democratic traditions: the ONS legitimised abridging democratic traditions even in long-standing democracies. Buzan’s claim is much more powerful, however, if “usually” is understood to refer not to historical traditions but to the nature of economic and political issues. These issues are ‘usually’ more amenable to debate because their resolution does not require secrecy. Unlike defence policies, whose success often depends on their remaining unknown to potential enemies, economic and political policies rarely require secrecy to be effective. Indeed, in many cases, such as a rise in interest rates aimed at curbing consumer spending, the success of a policy is predicated on its being known as widely as possible among the general population. It is therefore hard to justify blocking public debate on such issues by claiming that national security requires that they be shrouded in secrecy.

4.1.2.1.2. Less Scope for Co-opting and/or Delegitimising the Opposition

Perhaps the best way to defend the NNS from charges that it will empower the executive by providing it with the means to co-opt and/or delegitimise any political opposition is to analyse more closely how this co-optation and delegitimation operated under the ONS. Under the ONS, co-optation was primarily achieved through appeals to patriotism. Citizens and their representatives were called upon to ‘close ranks’ against world communism, an essentially foreign threat propagated by the Soviet Union. Delegitimation evoked the reverse of patriotism: treason. Opponents were portrayed as (more or less conscious) collaborators of the Soviet enemy, and therefore as traitors to country and nation.

These twin concepts of patriotism and treason, defendants of the NNS point out, only make sense in the context of international and inter-state conflict. The structural threats focussed on by the NNS do not presuppose a foreign enemy, and the discourse of economic and social concerns fits very uneasily with the rhetoric of patriotism. Preserving the environment or promoting economic growth is rarely seen as an act of patriotism, and deforestation and economic inefficiency can hardly be branded as treason. It is thus absurd to claim that the NNS can give rise to the same co-optation and delegitimation dynamics as the ONS.

4.1.2.1.3. Less Ambiguity

Finally, proponents of the NNS claim that the potential for executive empowerment under the NNS is limited because the notion overcomes the problem of ambiguity Wolfers raised. The NNS lacks the ONS’s ideological definition of threat and its obsession with covert, insidious evil. Instead, it focuses on non-ideological, objective, and observable dangers that manifestly and unambiguously threaten human well-being. Aids, crime, or famine are observable phenomena, and the threat they pose to human life is often all too obvious. They are also open to scientific verification, and indeed proponents of the NNS frequently invoke science in their arguments to lend them objectivity and credibility. Thus, for example, Krause notes that environmentalists “seek to reorient security studies [and policies]... by calling on the authority of the
natural sciences to demonstrate that environmental change ‘in fact’ represents a threat to human well-being’ (Krause and Williams 1996, 233).

If the threats identified by the NNS are objective, scientifically established, and publicly verifiable, the scope for ambiguity and therefore also for executive discretion within the NNS framework necessarily decreases. Because its threats are amenable to proof and open to dispute and verification, Wolfers’s critique of ‘national security’ as an ambiguous symbol is effectively laid to rest.

Thus proponents of the NNS argue that the notion cannot be used to legitimise executive empowerment. The pillars which sustained this empowerment under the ONS have been eliminated by the reforms the new notion has undergone. The NNS provides little justification for secrecy, limits the scope for delegitimation and co-optation of the opposition, and remedies Wolfers’s concerns about national security as an ambiguous symbol.

4.1.2.2. Military Empowerment

Proponents of the NNS also argue that the potential for military empowerment under the NNS is clearly limited. The NNS proposes a non-military conception of national security. Unlike the ONS, it de-emphasises interstate conflict as a menace to national security. Although it acknowledges that some countries do face foreign military threats, it insists that in most countries economic, social, and political issues present more significant menaces to national security. “A radical revision of the way in which ‘security’ and ‘threats to security’ are traditionally perceived [is required]... ‘security’ should no longer be seen as a predominantly military concept” (Nathan 1992, 12).

Under this non-military conception of national security, proponents of the NNS argue, there is simply no room for justifying military empowerment. Quite to the contrary, the NNS tends to reduce military privilege. Once “the military aspect of security is seen to be merely a part of the bigger picture... the [traditional] strong bias towards the military element in security policy” is eliminated (Buzan 1983, 253).

One consequence is a reduction in the lavish defence budgets of the Cold War era. By positing the dominance of non-military threats to national security, the NNS justifies reallocating funds from the military to social and economic sectors. Even more fundamentally, proponents of the NNS argue that it disengages ‘national security’ from the military’s sphere of competence. Political, social, and economic issues are ‘non-military’ not only because they are not instigated by hostile military action, but also because they are not generally amenable to a military solution. “Purely military approaches cannot solve, because they do not encompass, the problem of security” (Buzan 1983, 257). The military is thus deprived of its customary image as chief guarantor of national security. It becomes merely a “necessary but insufficient guardian” (Azar and Moon 1988, 11).
Thus, according to its proponents, the NNS disables rather than empowers the military. It stresses threats that cannot be addressed by military means and thereby demotes the military from its central position as guardian of national security. The NNS therefore cannot be used to legitimise increased military intervention in domestic politics.

4.1.3. Critique of the Arguments for the Harmlessness of the NNS

Not all the arguments evoked above are convincing. This section examines them critically to ascertain their validity, testing them both for logical flaws and against the empirical record.

4.1.3.1. Executive Empowerment

Proponents of the NNS concede that ‘national security’ is not a neutral term. Indeed, their aim is precisely to galvanise the government (including the executive) into action by employing the national security discourse to refer to hitherto neglected economic and social concerns. They argue that this is safe because the three pillars of executive empowerment under the ONS (secrecy, co-optation and delegitimation, and the ambiguity of national security as a symbol) are largely absent under the NNS. However, their argument hinges on fallacious claims about the effect of the altered content of the notion of ‘national security’ under the NNS.

4.1.3.1.1. Scope for Secrecy

The argument advanced by proponents of the NNS with regard to secrecy is a purely contingent one: the NNS provides no scope for secrecy simply because of the content of the national security threats it focuses on. Unlike the military threats stressed by the ONS, proponents of the NNS argue, the economic and social issues emphasised by the NNS do not require secrecy to be resolved. Therefore, the NNS cannot be used to justify such secrecy.

By simply assuming that there can never be national security benefits from secrecy, proponents of the NNS circumvent having to address the persistent “problem [of] where to draw the line between the public’s ‘right to know’ and the need for confidentiality in the interests of national security” (Nathan 1994, 63). The resultant lack of critical debate on the subject is unacceptable, because given the NNS’s broadening of the concept of national security the potential scope for secrecy is expanded rather than diminished under the NNS. The NNS recognises a vast array of economic, political, and social issues as central to national security. It is simply not true that none of these ‘new’ threats could be more efficiently addressed under the cover of secrecy. Proponents of the NNS admit that “defining a problem as a national security issue
automatically legitimates the use of exceptional means in response to that problem" (Nathan 1994, 24). On economic and social matters, such 'exceptional means' may include covert domestic intelligence operations to combat crime, harassment and clandestine deportation of immigrants, surreptitious manipulation of economic data, and secret deals with core economic players to stimulate the economy. All of these methods require secrecy.

Thus the reform of the content of 'national security' does not guarantee that the NNS cannot be used to justify secrecy. Some economic and social issues may be more easily addressed by covert means. Therefore there remains scope for secrecy and thus executive discretion under the NNS. Indeed, this scope may even be larger under the NNS than under the ONS, given the increased number of social and economic issues proposed as national security concerns by the NNS.

4.1.3.1.2. Scope for Co-opting and/or Delegitimising the Opposition

The twin concepts of patriotism and treason appealed to under the ONS to co-opt and/or delegitimise political opposition are not the only highly emotive concepts that can be deployed towards this end. The NNS replaces this state-centric rhetoric with an equally emotional discourse centring on commitment to 'the people'. The goals it stipulates (e.g. eradicating poverty, saving the environment, fighting crime and disease - in short, improving the welfare of the population as a whole) have tremendous moral appeal.

The NNS has tremendous co-optive power because of the ease with which its proponents can occupy the moral high ground. A crusade against poverty, disease, and other social and economic ills is morally and emotionally appealing to most individuals. It is also hard to disagree with – and hence springs the NNS’s considerable potential for delegitimization. Those opposing the NNS are readily portrayed as morally corrupt, insensitive to the plight of 'the people', and unresponsive to their demands - characteristics that are not merely morally objectionable but also politically fatal in a democratic electoral system. "By setting high-sounding goals... criticism can be silenced" (Vale, 1997).

In established democracies, the delegitimising potential of the NNS may be somewhat mitigated because most political actors have a history of democratic governance that helps insulate them from charges of being undemocratic. Adherence to the NNS is thus based mainly on the co-optative power inherent in the moral (and electoral) appeal of its rhetoric. In relatively new democracies, by contrast, delegitimization tends to be a very potent threat. In such systems, few political actors have strong democratic credentials and indeed many were implicated in previous authoritarian regimes. They are therefore especially vulnerable to charges of being unresponsive to popular needs and wishes. Conscious of this vulnerability, they are likely to ‘go along with’ a popular (or populist) version of the NNS even if they disagree with it, simply out of fear that criticising it will allow other parties to discredit them among the newly-empowered electorate. They may also, however, see championing a populist notion of ‘national security’ as an attractive way of establishing or
confirming their credentials as legitimate players in the new democratic game. Thus the co-optive power of the NNS is also increased in newly founded democracies: it extends beyond the moral and electoral appeal of the NNS itself to the symbolism its adoption is hoped to convey.

The combined potency of moral persuasiveness, co-optive power, and fear of delegitimation in promoting the NNS in newly-established democracies is amply illustrated by the South African experience with the NNS. Faced with the ANC’s dominance and the handicap of their own association with apartheid politics, South African opposition parties have overwhelmingly shied away from criticising the notion or questioning the desirability of making poverty, crime, or migration national security issues. Despite its proponents’ claims to the contrary, therefore, the scope for co-opting and/or delegitimising the opposition clearly remains significant under the NNS.

4.1.3.1.3. Ambiguity

Proponents of the NNS argue that the notion focuses on objective threats whose scientific basis and public verifiability preclude the executive discretion Wolfers associated with the “ambiguous symbol” of national security. However, the NNS is not as objective as its proponents imply, for two reasons.

First, ‘security’ has an inherently subjective component because it involves the perception of threat. In other words, its objective component (the relative absence or presence of danger) is complemented by a subjective judgement (a relative presence or absence of anxiety or fear) (Valdes 1989, 354). The subjective judgement is not necessarily commensurate to the objective danger: it is possible to feel fear despite the absence of significant danger, or relatively little anxiety in the presence of a substantial objective threat.

In a single individual, fear and anxiety are instinctive emotional responses to a personal assessment of threat. At the state level, however, ‘fear’ is necessarily mediated. An abstract entity like ‘the state’ does not perceive threats or feel fear. ‘National threat perceptions’ are not the instinctive reaction of any one individual, but the perceptions of many individual citizens shaped and given unity in a social construct. “What is actually being studied here... is not individual beliefs and intentions, but collective meaning structures” (Krause and Williams 1996, 238). Many factors, including the attitudes and unity of the national media, contribute to the establishing of these structures. Prominent among them, however, are pronouncements of threat made by government agencies. The examples in the previous chapter of South African politicians seeking to promote particular economic and social issues as national security concerns are instances of precisely this social construction process.

121 This increased potential for delegitimation in new democracies is noted in (Whitehead 1989).
122 Recognition of the subjective aspect of national security is also found in (Nathan 1994, 23)
The second reason why the NNS is less ‘objective’ than its proponents claim is that in addition to the process of interpretation just described, the issues ‘recognised’ as national security threats are also subject to a process of selection. Not all pressures on the state or its population can be recognised as national security threats. “States are at all times confronted by a multitude of political, economic, military and ecological pressures... Identifying which of these pressures deserve to be classified as national security issues is ultimately a matter of political choice rather than objective fact.” (Nathan 1994, 23). Governments tend to select a few specific issues to be ‘elevated’ to national security status. And although they “invariably present the threat scenarios that underpin their security policies as entirely rational and objective”, this selection is rarely pre-determined by ‘objective’ circumstances (Nathan 1994, 23). In addition to their assessment of the inherent urgency of an issue and its importance relative to other concerns, governments often allow estimates of both their own capacity to address an issue and the political capital to be drawn from promoting a particular issue as a national security threat to influence their selection124. In other words, selection normally involves a political choice.

Therefore, whether the public perceives a particular issue as a threat to national security depends at least in part on the actions of government officials, who act as mediators in directing public attention towards a particular issue and ‘helping’ to construct a collective interpretation of this phenomenon. There are limits to government discretion: some dangers may affect public safety so dramatically that they are hard to ignore or de-emphasise, while a diverse and thriving civil society with an active independent media can challenge the government’s monopoly on the selection and interpretation of threats. Nevertheless, the scope for government influence remains considerable: even seemingly obvious phenomena like foreign troops marching towards a national border require selection and interpretation: they will cause public alarm only if they are believed to be part of a hostile attack rather than, for example, allied soldiers on a training mission.

The argument that the NNS will not enhance executive discretion because it posits only objective threats fails to acknowledge that threats are constructed rather than simply recognised; they are not ‘objective givens’. Declaring an issue a national security threat almost always involves a political choice and a social persuasion campaign. Since even ‘objective’ threats therefore require government mediation, they, too, are open to government manipulation. National security thus remains an ambiguous symbol even under the NNS, and the scope for executive discretion persists.

4.1.3.1.4. Conclusion

Thus all three pillars of executive empowerment under the ONS persist under the NNS, albeit perhaps in attenuated form. Secrecy can be justified under the NNS, co-optation and delegitimation of the opposition remains feasible, and the ambiguity of the content of ‘national security’ is only partially remedied by the new

124 See (Bobrow and Chan 1988) on the question of leverage
notion’s focus on allegedly objective threats. The legitimation of executive empowerment under the NNS thus cannot be excluded.

4.1.3.2. Military Empowerment

The argument that by focusing on ‘non-military’ threats the NNS eliminates the possibility of military empowerment stands and falls with the idea of an inherently limited military sphere of competence. The crucial assumption is that the military can legitimately intervene only against military threats that must be resolved by military means. Structural economic and social issues, which are rarely amenable to resolution by military means, are thus outside the military’s sphere of competence and cannot be used to justify military intervention. This assumption clearly underlies Buzan’s confident prediction that defining national security in “economic, political, and social terms” will necessarily “counteract the strong bias towards the military element in security policy” (Buzan 1983, 253). However, the assumption that economic, social and political issues are by nature ‘civilian’ concerns beyond the military’s competence underestimates the military. The armed forces distinguish themselves from other government bodies by their monopoly on the tools of armed force, but their capacities are not limited to the application of this force.

A key concept in the modern debate about the scope of the military’s capabilities beyond the use of force is ‘collateral utility’. The concept is generally used to signify the utility of army equipment for civilian purposes. However, the army also has ‘collateral utility’ in less tangible ways: “The inherent collateral utility of... any modern defence force lies in... the skills it provides in a wide range of areas... the leadership qualities among its members; and the sense of discipline it instils in its members” (Kasrils 1995, 4). There is no inherent reason why this ‘collateral utility’ cannot be brought to bear on non-military issues. Indeed, militaries are frequently called upon to achieve non-military ends. Canadian soldiers were deployed to combat the 1997 Red River Flood. ‘Complex peacekeeping interventions’ have required UN troops to build roads and bridges, deliver famine relief, and administer territories in crisis. The Portuguese colonial empire was administered almost entirely by military officers, as were British possessions in northern Nigeria and Sudan. It is thus simply not true that the military is inherently incapable of addressing non-military issues.

Therefore, stressing non-military threats does not automatically preclude the legitimisation of military empowerment. This claim can be supported empirically. First, the contemporary experience in South Africa demonstrates that it remains possible to justify internal military deployment under the NNS. Second, Latin American history indicates that military empowerment remains a danger even under a notion of national security stressing structural threats.
4.1.3.2.1. ‘Non-Military’ Threats Can Legitimise Domestic Deployment of the Military

Since 1994, the South African government is no longer at war with large sections of its population. The unpopular and unrepresentative regime that needed security forces to buttress its power has disappeared. The new government has stressed its commitment to a version of the NNS which it declares does not call for domestic military intervention: “National security shall be sought primarily through efforts to meet the political, economic, social and cultural needs of South Africa’s people… Efforts to apply military solutions to political problems are inherently limited and invariably lead to acts of repression” (Modise 1996, chapter 2, clause 11.1 and chapter 5, clause 14.6).

However, domestic deployment of the military has continued. Originally, it was justified as necessary to quell continuing political violence in some townships, and notably in KwaZulu-Natal. The SANDF was charged with ‘stabilising’ affected areas and rendering effective policing possible, thereby allowing the democratic process to take root. Deployment under these terms was significant, but also explicitly temporary: ‘stabilised’ areas were to be handed over to the police, and the democratic system was expected to soon channel remaining political rivalries into the more peaceful electoral arena. Recently, however, a trend has developed for continued domestic deployment to be called for despite the decline of political violence. Such deployment is made possible by the 1996 Defence White Paper, which effectively allows for domestic SANDF deployment either in support of the South African police service or to assist any state department “for the purpose of socio-economic upliftment” ( clauses 1.5 of chapter 5 makes provision for SANDF deployment in support of the police service, though only when “the Police Service is unable to maintain law and order on its own”. Clauses 12 (chapter 5) and 33 (chapter 4) indicate that shortage of police personnel can also justify army deployment, though the latter also calls this deployment “undesirable”. Chapter 2, clause 11.9 states that “the primary role of the SANDF shall be to defend South Africa against external aggression”, but clause 1 in chapter 5 gives it five additional functions, including four domestic ones: the “preservation of life, health or property”, the “provision or maintenance of essential services”, “upholding law and order” in co-operation with SAPS, and support of any state department “for the purpose of socio-economic upliftment” - while clause 30 of the same chapter states that “the government is disinclined to employ the SANDF in socio-economic development”. In sum, although the White Paper sets out a preference for avoiding domestic deployment, it leaves several doors open to justify it.

125 Pretorius, for example, points out that army water tankers can provide drought relief (Pretorius 1995).
126 In 1994-1995, “the SA Army was called upon to deploy more troops on a monthly average for operational use inside the country, than was ever the case at the height of the Namibian border war and the internal settlement struggle” (Otto 1995, 54).
127 The White Paper contains conflicting sentiments. Clause 1.5 of chapter 5 makes provision for SANDF deployment in support of the police service, though only when “the Police Service is unable to maintain law and order on its own”. Clauses 12 (chapter 5) and 33 (chapter 4) indicate that shortage of police personnel can also justify army deployment, though the latter also calls this deployment “undesirable”. Chapter 2, clause 11.9 states that “the primary role of the SANDF shall be to defend South Africa against external aggression”, but clause 1 in chapter 5 gives it five additional functions, including four domestic ones: the “preservation of life, health or property”, the “provision or maintenance of essential services”, “upholding law and order” in co-operation with SAPS, and support of any state department “for the purpose of socio-economic upliftment” - while clause 30 of the same chapter states that “the government is disinclined to employ the SANDF in socio-economic development”. In sum, although the White Paper sets out a preference for avoiding domestic deployment, it leaves several doors open to justify it.
128 The Service Corps trains soldiers in civilian trades to facilitate rationalisation of the army and mitigate its effects on soldiers
their development projects. While Pretorius stresses the lending of materiel, however, Ronnie Kasrils also includes army skills, leadership qualities, and discipline (Pretorius 1995, 20 and Kasrils, 1995, 4). Sendall suggests yet another kind of ‘support’ the SANDF can give economic development: “The nation demands that the SANDF create a stable and secure environment” to enable economic growth (Sendall 1995, 57).

Military intervention has also been repeatedly called for to stem illegal immigration. “Whilst the Ministry of Defence acknowledges that the successful resolution of regional problems [like migration] lies primarily in the political, diplomatic, and economic fields, [the SANDF] is still responsible for the monitoring and protection of the country’s borders” (Kasrils 1995, 4). The government’s refusal to address migration at its roots by promoting regional growth increases its reliance on the SANDF’s ‘policing’ of its borders. In 1999, some 28 SANDF companies were deployed “for border protection and associated duties” (White 1999, 31). In an interesting turn of phrase, the idea that the army ‘protects the country’s borders’ has turned from stopping military invasions to stemming the invading ‘tide’ of illegal immigrants: “The function of protecting the country’s borders has been undertaken by the SA Army since 1986. Initially, this was meant to neutralise [sic] armed border crossings, but subsequently it became extended to the interception of illegal border trespassers, such as refugees and criminals” (Pretorius 1995, 19).

Finally, ‘combating’ crime has also become an accepted SANDF employment. In 1997, the SANDF “deployed an average of 49 full-time companies (between 6,000 and 6,500 troops) and 88 part-time sections (approximately 681 troops) around the country on a daily basis” (White 1999, 29). Internal deployment for crime prevention is unlikely to decrease significantly in the near future. Striking proof of the consensus on its continuing utility came during the 1998 budget discussions for the SANDF. The SANDF argued that proposed budget cuts would reduce its capacity to second the SAPS in anti-crime operations. “Cabinet noted this reduction with concern… [and] indicated that it would consider special funding for this purpose.” (Allie 1998, 23). Cabinet thus clearly intends perpetuating SANDF involvement in law enforcement operations in the foreseeable future.

In short, despite expectations and rhetoric to the contrary, the South African army’s days of internal deployment are far from numbered. Despite the adoption of a version of the NNS centering on structural social and economic issues, reliance on the SANDF to safeguard national security remains. Domestic military deployment has persisted and indeed increased since 1994, its justification slowly shifting from the need to ‘stabilise’ areas of political violence to the combat of economic underdevelopment, crime, and illegal immigration.
4.1.3.2.2. ‘Non-Military’ Threats Can Justify Military Intervention

As seen in Chapter 2, Latin American militaries became politicised because of their internal deployment by the civilian regimes of the 1950s, which was legitimised by an internalised version of the ONS. At this point, the details of this politicisation merit attention.

Internal deployment challenged “the armed forces... to rethink themselves, their role, and their mission” (Perelli 1993, 27). In response, the continent’s military academies and training institutions began to formulate and develop their own national security doctrines (Stepan 1973, 50). The starting point of their reflections was the internalised ONS proposed by the civilian governments. Like the SADF in South Africa, Latin American militaries were impressed Beaufre’s characterisation of the Cold War as an indirect war waged by the USSR against the West (Perelli 1993, 27-28). This gave rise to what Pion-Berlin identifies as the “hardline” themes in their national security doctrines (Pion-Berlin 1989), which stressed the immediate threat posed by the (often armed) agents of Marxism that had to be eliminated - if necessary by a ‘dirty war’. Strategies of internal war and counterinsurgency accordingly replaced tactics of interstate war on the curricula of new professional military institutions (Stepan 1973, 50).

However, Beaufre alone did not explain how the Cold War could have been brought to Latin America with such apparent success. Therefore “military institutions began to study such questions as the social and political conditions facilitating the growth of revolutionary protest” (Stepan 1973, 50). The principal answer they found was economic. Many Latin American countries had prospered during the first half of the twentieth century, since their export goods faced little competition and higher demand thanks to Europe’s devastation. Driven by this prosperity, industrialisation made some headway, though import substitution was hampered by perceptions that exports would remain major currency winners. However, when European productive capacity recovered in the late 1950s and Australia and Asia became competitors in Latin America’s export markets, the economic boom abated. The still fragile industrialisation process, which depended on subsidies from the export industry, was devastated. Living standards fell as pressure on wages increased and inflation rose in response to balance of payments crises. It was this economic stagnation that provided the conditions for ‘communist infiltration’, according to the new national security doctrines.

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129 Note that Beaufre was accepted earlier in Latin America than in South Africa, however.
130 Of course, other explanatory variables were also taken into account. For example, in Argentina a lack of civic nationalism was identified as a contributing factor, and as a result national symbols and leaders were exalted and a cult of the ‘organic nation’ was promoted. The Liga explicitly stated that part of its political agenda was “to stimulate above all the feelings of ‘argentineness’ in order to invigorate the personality of the nation” (Egan 1988, 208). The most pressing emphasis, however, was nevertheless placed on economic factors promoting ‘communist’ unrest.
131 The Import Substitution Model (ISI) is one of the main economic models; it posits that for sustained development an economy must build up its own industrial base, rather than relying on the export of raw materials and agricultural produce, and the import of manufactured goods. Through this step, the economy becomes less vulnerable to fluctuations in terms of trade
132 Argentina's case is illustrative: “As world prices for agricultural products fell relative to those of industrial goods, Argentina had to produce and sell more to earn the foreign exchange that would pay for the imports of machinery and capital goods essential for the industrialization process” (Fisher 1989).
The resulting unrest was “a Dirty war inspired by Soviet sympathizers determined to capitalise on internal disarray for their own expansionist designs” (Egan 1988, 188)\textsuperscript{133}.

The “softline” themes of Latin American national security doctrines reflected this assessment of the conditions that underlay and invited Marxist penetration (Pion-Berlin 1989). Unlike civilian governments, whose response to the ‘Communist’ threat was largely repressive\textsuperscript{134}, the militaries proceeded to study how to achieve economic development and thereby extirpate the threat at its roots. Stepan has aptly termed this evolution in military focus the “new professionalism of internal security and national development”, to distinguish it from Huntington’s externally-oriented professionalism which we have seen in Chapter 1 to be an essential safeguard of liberal democracy (Stepan 1973).

The economic theories contained in these “softline” themes varied considerably from country to country\textsuperscript{135}. In all countries affected, however, the militaries came to believe that “in comparison to the civilian politicians, they now had constructed the correct doctrines of national security and development, [while also] possess[ing] the trained cadres to implement these doctrines and the institutional force to impose their solution to the crisis” (Stepan 1973, 58)\textsuperscript{136}. They began to see and portray themselves as the state’s “brain center, able to make necessary and intelligent decisions for the good of the state... [through] the derivation of knowledge from geo-political and economic theory and their instinctual sense as rulers” (Lopez 1986, 81).

New Professionalism encouraged Latin American militaries to believe that their sphere of competence extended well beyond purely military issues to include such ‘non-military’ matters as economics. Their claims to proficiency found a receptive audience at least in part because their confidence contrasted sharply with the civilian governments’ apparent incapacity to promote stability and economic growth. “The inability of democratic regimes to efficiently resolve pressing economic and social issues... [led] many citizens [to] endorse, or at least accept, alternative solutions such as military regimes.” (Norden 1996, 426). They also benefited from traditional images of the military as a united, disciplined, incorruptible, and nationalistic force (Finer 1962, 20). In combination with the apparent incapacity of civilian governments and their own positive public image, then, new professionalism allowed several Latin American militaries to extend their accepted realm of competence far beyond purely military matters, and this helped legitimise their ascension to power in the 1970s. Legitimation of military empowerment with reference to a notion of national security including structural, ‘non-military’ threats is thus clearly possible.

\textsuperscript{133} Note the parallels to South Africa’s Revolutionary Onslaught Theory.
\textsuperscript{134} For Perelli, “Perhaps the most salient factor of the period was the inability of the ruling elites to articulate a political and ideological response to the challenges of the Left. Instead, they turned more and more to repression” (Perelli 1993, 32)
\textsuperscript{135} In Argentina, the economic model used was neo-liberal, calling for complete deregulation in labour, goods, and money markets. In Brazil economic liberalism was less enthusiastically received: the military’s approach to the labour and goods markets remained Keynesian, though money markets were deregulated. The Peruvian military adopted a left-wing economic doctrine, turning against the hitherto dominant oligarchic class (Saba 1987).
\textsuperscript{136} Stepan refers specifically to Brazil in this passage, but the phenomenon was mirrored in other Latin American countries such as Argentina, Peru, and, eventually, Uruguay.
4.1.3.2.3. ‘Non-Military’ Threats Provide Foundational Projects for Long-Term Military Rule

The full effect of New Professionalism and the ensuing claim of Latin American militaries to be competent in dealing with non-military threats only became apparent after the establishment of military rule, however. Arguably, new Professionalism was not necessary to justify the military coups themselves: the militaries’ hardline themes about combating Communist insurgency might have sufficed. Indeed, “in the installation phase of the new regimes, ...the military discourse centre[d] on its role in re-establishing order in the face of the ‘chaos and anarchy’ of the old regime. In Brazil in 1964, Argentina in 1966 and especially in 1976 and in Chile and Uruguay in 1973, this element prevailed” (Munck 1989, 65). Thereafter, however, the military discourse changed, and softline themes became more prominent. Having ‘neutralised’ the immediate threat of insurgency and subversion, military regimes “looked towards the deeper roots of the malaise which had formed their nations into sick societies” (Munck 1989, 56). Since New Professionalism maintained that these roots were predominantly economic, the militaries turned towards extirping economic underdevelopment. “Modern military dictatorships... saw themselves as ending broad political cycles... and not just dealing with a political emergency.” (Munck 1989, 56). The effect of this shift in discourse and focus was the legitimation of long-term military rule.

Hard-line national security themes were ill-suited for providing long-term regime legitimacy to military rulers because they were essentially reactive and employed a discourse of exceptionalism. They defended giving emergency powers to the military in order to combat an imminent Communist insurgency. A threat of armed subversion, however, is normally rapidly defused, since few groups can resist the determined onslaught of a national army for long. Of course, militaries could - and did - still claim that it was necessary to root out ‘passive’ or ‘incipient’ insurgency. The Peruvian military, for example, defeated its organised guerrilla opposition within six months in 1965-66, but the “elimination of the latent state of subversion became the primary objective of military action” until constitutional government was reinstalled in 1985 (Stepan 1973, 61). ‘Latent’ threats are significantly less potent than imminent ones in justifying exceptional measures like military rule, however. Legitimation of long-term military rule could be achieved much more effectively by moving beyond the discourse of exceptionalism towards a positive “foundational project” that justified continued military rule (Munck 1989). This is precisely what New Professionalism offered.

Latin American military regimes institutionalised their rule by propagating the pursuit of economic development, rather than electoral victory, as a new political formula upon which to base government authority. General Alvaro, for example, claimed of the Peruvian military dictatorship:

“our legitimacy does not come from votes, from the votes of a rotten system, because that system never acted in defense of the true interests of the Peruvian people. Our legitimacy has its origins in the uncontroversible fact that we are transforming this country, precisely to defend and interpret the interests of the people, who were cheated and sold out with impunity.” (Pion-Berlin 1989, 415)
Economic development is by nature a long-term project, and it was a popular goal among most sections of the population. In addition, failure to develop might lead to a resurgence of Communist insurgency. New Professionalism (and past governments’ economic failures) allowed the militaries to claim that they alone knew how to provide economic development. Thus the “nation’s [continued] security and survival [was] closely linked to modernization and development goals as defined by a small group of military and technocratic leaders” (Lopez 1986, 76).

Continued military rule was therefore justified in the interests of national security and economic development. For over a decade, this argument served to legitimise military rule among large sections of the Latin American population. Far from barring military empowerment, therefore, economic development provided an enduring political formula furnishing military regimes with the authority to institute long-term rule.

4.1.3.2.4. Conclusion

The notion that structural social and economic threats are incapable of justifying military empowerment rests on the assumption that a military’s sphere of competence is inherently limited to issues that the application of military force can resolve. This is a theoretical and historical fallacy. In contemporary South Africa, domestic military deployment remains high and is justified within an NNS framework. In Latin America, military regimes developed national security doctrines in the 1960s that incorporated ‘softline’ themes of economic development alongside ‘hardline’ themes of anti-Communist counterinsurgency. These ‘softline’ themes helped justify the initial empowerment of these militaries, but their most profound impact was the legitimisation of long-term military rule long after the imminent Communist military threat had been eliminated.

4.1.4. Conclusion

History prompts us to expect a tension between liberal democracy and the discourse of national security at the political institutional level. The liberal democratic tradition stresses the need to keep the state weak and divided, whereas the discourse of national security has legitimised the concentration of power within the executive and the military. The ONS allowed for executive empowerment by stressing the need for secrecy, enabling leaders to delegitimise and/or co-opt the opposition, and positing an ambiguous notion of ‘national security’. It also served to justify military empowerment.

Proponents of the NNS argue that their notion cannot legitimise similar developments. They maintain that the content of the notion of national security has been so thoroughly transformed that there is little scope for justifying secrecy, no opportunity for elite manipulation of the concept, and no possibility of
delegitimising the opposition. Furthermore, they argue that by stressing non-military threats, the NNS eliminates the danger that it might be used to legitimise military empowerment.

However, each of these arguments is fallacious. The NNS rules out neither executive nor military empowerment. Thus at the political institutional level, the revisions proposed to the content of the notion of national security are not profound enough to guarantee that the NNS cannot be used to legitimise the same infringements of liberal democracy as the ONS.
4.2. The Societal Level

Historically, 'national security' has been invoked to legitimise state violations of individuals' civic and human rights. Such abuses occurred in all the areas studied in the previous two chapters, namely the West, Latin America, and South Africa. These abuses, however, occurred under the ONS. Proponents of the NNS claim that their reform efforts preclude the recurrence of legitimisation of such abuses under the NNS. After briefly recalling the lessons of past abuses, this section examines the arguments advanced by proponents of the NNS to demonstrate the harmlessness of their concept to liberal democratic principles. As in the previous section, these arguments are found inadequate. Despite the profound differences between the two concepts, the NNS is as capable of legitimising abuses of individuals' rights as the ONS.

4.2.1. The Effects of the ONS

The existence of a Communist threat was a central proposition of the ONS. At the societal level, this raised the critical issue of the status of citizens who were (or were labelled as being) Communists or Communist sympathisers. In so far as they were perceived as part of the Communist threat, their individual safety - and therefore respect for their rights - was seen to stand in opposition to national security. Two factors thus helped determine the extent to which these citizens' rights were violated: how serious a threat they seemed capable of posing to national security, and how likely it seemed that they would in fact betray their country to the Communist enemy.

4.2.1.2. The ONS in the West

Under the Western ONS, the principal threat to national security was perceived as external, arising from Soviet nuclear devices and indirect strategies of war and through the Soviet expansionist challenge to national values and interests abroad. Except in the immediate post-war period\(^{137}\), Western countries were not seen as internally threatened by the spread of Communism. Instead, a 'healthy' and widespread civic nationalism was believed to render them resistant to the appeal of Communism as an ideology. The overwhelming majority of Western populations seemed to identify with, and feel loyalty towards, their countries' political and social institutions and the national values they embodied.

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\(^{137}\) The Marshall Plan was a reaction to this danger, seeking to shore up European nationalism by stimulating national economies (notably the German, French, and Italian), thus rendering Communism less attractive. It was resoundingly successful: Communist parties' refusal of the Marshall Plan (demanded by Moscow) heavily damaged their popularity, while, under the twin influences of growing prosperity and revelations of excesses in the Soviet bloc, the Communist alternative to country-based nationalism grew progressively less attractive. For most of the Cold War, a Communist victory from within, through ideological 'infiltration' of the domestic population, seemed a remote possibility in Western democracies.
As proselytisers, Communist nationals therefore seemed relatively harmless in this framework, simply because they seemed unlikely to be able to cultivate the necessary following to launch an insurgency or provoke national disintegration. However, they still posed a threat to national security as potential traitors. By engaging in espionage and sabotage for the USSR, Communist citizens could help the Soviet Union win its ideological war against the West.

Thus targeted surveillance of Communist sympathisers by state security forces was a minimum safety measure practised throughout the West. The precedent for surveillance had been set during the two World Wars, when recognition that “popular opinion or the morale on the home front [was] a critical strategic resource... [had led to] the military and security services extend[ing] their role of monitoring behaviour presumed to be subversive” (Dandeker 1994, 358)\(^{138}\). During the Cold War, surveillance became a strategy for coping more specifically with the threat of treason by Communist nationals. ‘Suspicious’ individuals were monitored in order to detect and foil any attempt at treason, and allow the culprit to be apprehended and charged before a court of law (Ybarra 1998, 21). This strategy sits uneasily with the tenets of liberal democracy. Surveillance conflicts with traditional liberal democratic demands that the state respect citizens’ private sphere\(^{39}\). Targeted surveillance of suspected Communists also violates the principle of freedom of political opinion, since individuals are subjected to surveillance specifically because they hold a particular set of political beliefs. Nevertheless it was justified as necessary within the ONS framework.

Indeed, the principal critique raised about surveillance during the Cold War was not that it was too harsh but that it was naively lenient (Ybarra 1998). Leaving Communists free rein until they could be convicted of treason was a risky strategy given the fallibility of monitoring techniques. Reliance on surveillance could thus only be countenanced if most Communists were not actually expected to commit treason. It depended on the expectation expressed in Churchill’s famous dictum “they may be Communists, but they are our Communists”, i.e. that Communist citizens would ultimately place national allegiance above their ideological convictions. In many Western democracies, this expectation was held quite confidently throughout most of the Cold War. In the USA, however, this confidence was shaken in the late 1940s, when the spectacular series of spy scandals implicating Bentley, Hiss, Fuchs, and the Rosenbergs seemed to demonstrate that Communists were willing to choose ideology over nation. Fanned by McCarthyist politicians, public fear of Communist treason escalated to the level of “paranoia” (Hofstadter, 1965). The assumption that Communists could be loyal nationals was dismissed as naïve. Instead “the basic assumption of McCarthyism [was] that Communists were traitors” (Ybarra 1998 21, 23). In this context, the prevailing surveillance tactics against Communist nationals no longer seemed appropriate.

\(^{138\text{On the rise of the perception that one's society's support for the war effort was a critical resource in modern (total) warfare, see Chapter 2}}\)

\(^{139\text{See chapter 1. As J. S. Mill insists, “over himself, over his own body and his own mind, the individual is sovereign” (Held 1996, 101).}}\)
This heightened threat perception justified the adoption of more aggressive measures against Communist citizens, including a ban on Communists in public employment and a series of HUAC hearings which amounted to public tribunals denouncing Communism and persecuting Communists (Schrecker, 1998). They constituted state discrimination against, and harassment of, individual citizens on account of their political beliefs. These policies were not caused solely by McCarthyist ideology: political rivalries were also settled during the HUAC hearings, and the military industrial complex may have contributed to retaining high levels of internal security. However, McCarthyism provided the justification for these policies by escalating and internalising threat perceptions within the framework of the ONS.

McCarthyism demonstrated that the protection afforded to individual rights under the Western ONS was fragile and conditional. As long as national confidence was high and Communist nationals were seen as unlikely to put ideology above national allegiance, rights infractions remained relatively low. When this confidence eroded, more serious abuses occurred. However, even at the height of McCarthyism, Americans feared only individual acts of treason, not the disintegration of their nation as a whole (Schrecker 1994, 18). Communists continued to be viewed as posing a threat only as traitors, not as proselytisers. This helps explain why rights abuses remained limited both in the number of people affected and in the severity of abuse: fear never escalated enough to justify mass detentions, torture, or summary executions.

4.2.1.2. The ONS in Latin America

By contrast, in Latin America gross violations of even the most basic human rights were legitimised by a national security discourse which depicted the nation as under the acute internal threat of dissolution due to the spread of Communist ideology. At the centre of this discourse was a primarily ideological definition of the nation. Latin American national security doctrines described the nation as an organic and timeless entity, which had a transcendental soul as well as a physical body constituted by its individual citizens (with the military, of course, furnishing the “brain”). It was this soul, the set of national values that cemented individual citizens into a Nation, that Communism was trying to destroy. And any Communist citizen represented a defeat of the Nation and a danger to it: he/she had turned away from the nation’s ‘soul’, weakening the nation by becoming essentially foreign to it, and now potentially threatening it by inviting others to follow his/her example. “The target of the enemy... [was] the conquest of the spirit of the population... Hence the struggle... must be fought inside the soul of each and every inhabitant of the nation.” (Perelli 1993, 28). Four factors made this scenario particularly adept at legitimising large-scale violations of individuals’ rights:

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140 As C. Wright Mills argues in The Power Elite (Oxford University Press, New York, 1956), elites within the military and security forces have an interest in sustaining high levels of internal security to bolster their own revenues and prestige.
First, next to this Nation made more than the sum of its physical parts through the existence of a transcendental soul, any single individual became insignificant and therefore expendable. “From the people understood as an ‘organic whole’ we can infer that each individual counts for nothing. ... In the name of the whole, each and all can be crushed one at a time” (Sartori 1962, 19). For Latin American national security regimes, “under all conditions, individual security [was] subordinate to national security.” (Lopez 1986, 84).

Second, however, the governments did not need to portray every violation of individual rights as a necessary sacrifice of an individual member of the nation to the whole, since Communists were by definition foreign to the nation. Communists had turned their back on the nation by divorcing themselves from the national ‘soul’. They could not, therefore, expect particular government concern for their safety. Latin American governments argued that their duty was to first to the nation and then to individual nationals, and only then - if national security allowed - to the safety of ‘foreigners’. Thus although Communist nationals’ rights might have to be immolated at the ‘altar’ of national security ‘real’ citizens were safe: “Argentine citizens were not victims of repression because the repression was aimed at a minority whom the government did not consider Argentine” (Egan 1988, 213).

Third, violating Communists rights was portrayed as legitimate because in addition to being foreign, Communists were dangerous. Communist nationals by definition betrayed, wounded, and weakened the nation of which they once were a part. This held true even if they did not actually intend to be treasonous or even proclaimed their continuing allegiance to the nation: duped by Communist propaganda, they might merely be unconscious tools (idiotas utiles) to foreign interests, but they were still a dangerous national security threat and had to be treated as such (Egan 1988, 192). The nation was fighting a “cancer” and Communist nationals were the infected cells (Munck 1989, 55). Consciously or not, they were not only victims of the national ‘disease’ but also agents of its spread. “Like any organic entity... [the nation was] only as healthy as its various systems” (Lopez 1986, 81). Like a physical tumour, Communist nationals had to be ruthlessly eradicated to save the life of the whole.

Finally, the scenario vastly expanded the scope for legitimising civil and human rights abuses because there was no natural limit on who could be labeled a Communist, and no way of verifying whether a particular individual was a Communist sympathizer. ‘Communists’ could, of course, be overtly ideological active opponents of the regime. Whether armed or unarmed, these “dangerous combatants”142 were presented as legitimate targets of state power and military force. In the ‘dirty war’ for national survival, “the modalities of a free and open society could have no place” (Egan 1988, 189). But any other opponent of the regime could also be labeled a ‘Communist’, and thus subjected to the same treatment. Because the governments

141 Militaries saw and portrayed themselves as a “brain center, able to make necessary and intelligent decisions for the good of the state... [through] the derivation of knowledge from geo-political and economic theory [i.e. New Professionalism] and their instinctual sense as rulers” (Lopez 1986, 81).

142 “Terrorism was not just a matter of carrying guns or throwing bombs... but even more insidiously, also ‘about pushing one’s cause with ideas contrary to our Western and Christian civilisation’” (Egan 1988, 213)
influenced who could be portrayed as a Communist and thus a national security menace under the internalised ONS, “terror action by the government [could never] be considered action against civilian innocents, but [only] appropriate levels of force against combatants” (Lopez 1986, 90).

4.2.1.3. Conclusion

Violations of individuals’ rights were legitimised under both the Western and the Latin American ONS. A key factor determining the extent of violations was the degree of threat Communist sympathisers were believed to pose. In the West, threat perceptions were relatively low. Communist nationals were not believed capable of bringing about the disintegration of the nation as a whole. At worst, they could commit treason by passing on national security information to the Soviet adversary. Western nations thus relied mostly on surveillance to protect national security. McCarthyism demonstrated, however, that when fear of treason escalated the Western ONS could also justify more serious abuses of civil rights. Under the Latin American ONS, the perceived threat was national disintegration from within, and Communist nationals were defined to be integral components of this threat. They not only could seriously endanger the nation’s very survival (by destroying its soul) but the mere fact of being Communist was already the first step to doing so. They were thus by definition outside the nation, and instead of potentially posing a relatively minor threat, they posed a major peril with certainty. They were essentially foreign, inherently dangerous agents in an ideological system where even the committed member of the nation was considered subordinate to the nation as a whole and could, if necessary, be legitimately sacrificed to it. State violation of even the most basic human rights (including the right to life) was legitimised by this scenario, and its extent was increased even further by the vagueness of the label ‘Communist’, which was easy to impose and almost impossible to refute.

Thus the degree of threat individual citizens are believed capable of posing helped determine the extent of human and civil rights abuses that could be legitimised under the ONS.

4.2.2. Arguments for Why the NNS Cannot Legitimise Similar Abuses

Two arguments can be made to demonstrate that, unlike the ONS, the NNS cannot legitimise violations of individuals’ rights and is therefore compatible with the societal requirements of liberal democracy. The first relates to the question of what kind of threats individuals are believed to be able to pose to national security. It begins by noting that under the NNS the principal national security threats are structural rather than agent-driven. No enemy force or individual causes and spreads underdevelopment, disease, or poverty. Therefore no individual can credibly be labeled as a national security threat under the NNS. The second argument holds that under the NNS the nation is so inclusively defined that there is not reason to expect
individuals to act against national security. Since the NNS is about the security of all individuals within a polity, it simply does not make sense for any individual to want to threaten national security.

Thus, proponents of the NNS argue, no individual can be credibly portrayed as a national security threat under the NNS, and therefore no violations of individuals’ rights can be legitimised with reference to the framework.

4.2.2.1. Structural Threats

Under the ONS, people were the driving force behind national security threats. Communism was spread by Communists, and it was dangerous because it induced people to support subversion, to abandon and betray the ‘national way of life’, and/or help deliver the country into communist hands. Defending a nation/country against Communism therefore involved defending it against Communists - whether idiotas utiles or deliberately malevolent ideological foreigners.

As its proponents point out, the NNS is very different. It focuses on structural dangers like economic underdevelopment, disease, poverty, and environmental degradation, which it envisions as arising from predominantly systemic forces. There is no equivalent to the Soviet ‘evil empire’ within the NNS, no outside force seeking to undermine a country’s security by spreading disease or poverty within it. Indeed, the menaces stressed by the NNS are such that any conspiracy theory blaming them on malicious human agency is simply implausible. While an invading army can cause poverty, destruction, and pestilence, the NNS explicitly focuses on long-term economic and social problems that can easily be distinguished from the devastation of war. These problems are not spread maliciously by other countries. Indeed, they are not caused by individual human agency at all, but arise largely from systemic circumstances like unfavourable terms of trade or natural circumstances like the absence of natural resources or the fragility of the local ecosystem. Consequently, proponents of the NNS argue, it is impossible to blame local individuals for the existence of these dangers. If the menaces focused on under the NNS are not caused by human agency, no human can credibly be accused of posing such a menace. Thus focusing on structural threats to national security automatically impedes the legitimation of violence against individuals.

Proponents of the NNS are not the first to make such an argument. Pion-Berlin’s comments on ‘softline’ themes of Latin American national security doctrines stress a similar effect. He notes that unlike hardline themes, which stipulated that “the only protection [for national security] is to wage a full-scale war against this unscrupulous and persistent [Marxist] foe” (Pion-Berlin 1989, 417), softline themes did not centre on war against Marxists. “Softline advocates talk[ed] less of social and political agents of internal disorder and cast blame instead on the nation’s objective conditions” (Pion-Berlin 1989, 418): killing Marxists could not be a solution, because as long as economic conditions remained unchanged Communism would always find new converts. What was required was not repression but economic development - and this could not be
achieved by military force. "National security is [therefore] not something that can be decreed; it evolves with the transformation of the nation's technological and industrial capacity and with improved economic performance, standards of living, and social equality" (Pion-Berlin 1989, 417). Consequently, once softline themes became dominant, the scope for legitimising the use of force against individuals was limited. In fact, softline advocates insisted that "coercion should [not] prevail in the counterrevolutionary struggle, nor are states allowed to declare war on their own citizens." (Pion-Berlin 1989, 421).

In sum, Pion-Berlin suggests that under the ONS rights violations legitimised by hardline themes could not be justified under the softline ones stressing more structural threats to national security. Proponents of the NNS can thus build on his argument and stress that because the NNS has only softline themes, it cannot be used to legitimise violating individuals' rights.

4.2.2.2. Inclusiveness

The second argument advanced for why individuals' rights are safe under the NNS is that in this paradigm national security threats are defined simply as the threats faced by the individual citizens who constitute the nation. As seen in Chapter 2, the NNS not only broadens the notion of national security but also deepens it. It declares a country's population to be the proper referent object of national security. "The purpose of...[national] security policies is to provide security for people, for all people, and not merely for abstractions like the state or for elites..." (Johansen 1992, 115; emphasis in text).

Defenders of the NNS propose this definition of national security because they distrust governments' definitions of national security. Rugumamu, for example, notes that "what passes for national security in most parts of Africa is basically regime security" (Rugumamu 1993, 6). Defining national security in this manner does more than prevent government arbitrariness in defining national security concerns, however. Because it offers an inclusive and unbiased assessment of the security needs of this nation, it seems to eliminate any reason for a citizen to actually want to harm national security. Everybody is part of the nation, and national security is defined as the security of the nation's members. Why would anybody want to endanger national security in these circumstances? And if nobody has an incentive to undermine national security, nobody can plausibly be depicted as a national security threat. Therefore, proponents of the NNS argue, it is impossible to legitimise the violation of any individual's rights as necessary for the preservation of national security. The NNS cannot be used to credibly justify state violations of individuals' rights.

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143 Reprisal through military force became 'only' a temporary element of a softline national security strategy, employed to quell subversion and 'revolutionary unrest' in the initial phases of military take-over or in specific cases of armed insurgency: "military response to revolutionary insurgency be part of a cohesive strategy guided by politically sensitive actors able to win public trust and confidence" (Pion-Berlin 1989. 419). As seen above, New Professionalism made Latin American militaries confident that they could also address the 'non-military' development issue.
In sum, proponents of the NNS argue that the notion has been thoroughly reformed. Both because of the NNS's focus on structural threats and because of the inclusiveness with which it defines national security concerns, no individual can credibly be portrayed as a national security threat. Therefore it is impossible to justify violations of individuals' rights with reference to the NNS.

4.2.3. Critique of the Arguments for the Harmlessness of the NNS

Neither of the two arguments described in the previous section withstands critical exploration. The idea that an emphasis on structural threats precludes the identification of individuals as national security threats, and therefore prevents the legitimation of human and civic rights violations, neglects the fact that even if the threats are fundamentally structural, human beings may obstruct government policies to cope with these threats. Individuals thus remain capable of harming national security as defined by the NNS. The fatal flaw in the argument that an inclusive definition of national security eliminates any incentive for individuals to want to harm national security is that it assumes greater harmony among the individuals than seems warranted, given issues of interest aggregation and short time horizons. Thus neither argument proves that the NNS cannot be used to justify the violation of individuals' rights.

4.2.3.1. Structural Threats

By definition, the existence of a structural threat cannot be blamed on a group of human individuals. However, the persistence of such a threat can be blamed on human agency. Humans can be accused of hampering government efforts to address a structural threat - and individuals thus accused stand indicted of endangering national security.

Two kinds of individual can be accused in this way: those opposing development policies and those viewed as impeding the actual development process. The former can be accused either of deliberately plotting to perpetuate the national security menace or as fools - idiotas útiles again - unconsciously hindering the government in the fulfilment of its duty. Either way, they face delegitimation and perhaps intimidation if they do not cease their opposition. It is the latter who are likely to face the greatest danger, however. Whereas critics of government policy are merely trying to hinder progress against the national security threat, those who actually impede the implementation of these policies actively perpetuate it. Their freedom

144 Considerable overlap, of course, can exist (and existed) between the two categories. X may persist with behaviour the regime regards as impeding the development process precisely because (s)he does not agree with the regime on what policies lead to such development. (S)he sees no reason to alter his/her behaviour because she does not see it as damaging the economic development process. Nevertheless there is a distinction between the two categories: opposing a policy is one thing, preventing its implementation another.
to continue their activities thus stands in direct opposition to national security. If they come to be perceived as recalcitrant or inflexible hindrances of government efforts, the violation of their rights may be legitimised by appeal to ‘national security’. While according to the structural threat discourse their elimination does not guarantee national security, it can nevertheless be portrayed as removing a significant impediment to achieving this security.

There is therefore room for legitimising the abridgement of civil and even human rights in a polity that has accepted a national security discourse focussing on structural threats. And the likelihood of rights abuses can be expected to increase if government attempts to address the structural problem are seen to fail. Governments who fail to resolve an issue they have declared a national security concern have a considerable incentive to attribute their failure solely to human interference and seek to mask it behind a series of reprisals: within a national security framework, admitting incompetence in addressing a national security issue amounts to indicating an incapacity to govern.

Empirically, moreover, Pion-Berlin is mistaken in suggesting that Latin American states could no longer legitimise declaring war on their own citizens once they adopted a softline formulation of national security. Although this rhetoric may not have incited violence as overtly as the hardline themes which preceded it, the emergence of economic development as the central national security concern of Latin American national security regimes did not rule out ‘legitimate’ violence against individuals.

“National security was defined in major part as state-directed economic development... [but] the style of the approach was a state of war... By defining the security issue as predominantly one of economic development and philosophy, national security ideology set the scene for a very large number of those who disagree with either the substance of economic decisions or the style of its implementation to be labelled by the ruling elite as ‘enemies of the state’.” (Lopez 1986, 86).

The ‘neutralisation’ of individuals who hampered economic development, while not guaranteeing national security, could at least be argued to remove a significant impediment to achieving this security. The fate of trade union members in Argentina illustrates that this ‘softline’ rhetoric was no less deadly than the less subtle hardline discourse:

As reputed hotbeds of Communist infiltration, trade unions were an eminent target under the first wave of repression justified by hardline themes. Pressure did not ease after the adoption of softline themes, however. According to the Argentine national security doctrine, the key to sustainable economic development was economic liberalism, characterised by the deregulation of all three major markets - goods, money, and labour. The generals believed that the neglect of these principles in favour of Keynesian alternatives had already gravely endangered the nation in the past. For them, the rise of puissant labour unions in the 1930s and 1940s (tolerated by most politicians and actively encouraged Peron, who harnessed

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145 It should also be noted that the state could always revert to hardline themes if it felt it needed to. I do not pursue this further because the purpose of this section is to explore the possible legitimisation of rights violations under a notion of national security stressing structural threats.
union bargaining power for political ends) had caused the economic downturn of the 1960s by encouraging unsustainably high wage levels. The roots of the economic and social crises of the 1960s and 1970s which had made the country vulnerable to World Communism could thus be traced “back to the rise of Peronism… with developmentalist economics and populist politics as its main symptoms” (Munck 1989, 68).

The key task the military saw for itself after the initial repressive phase was thus to reinitiate economic development - but at the same time direct it “towards realisable goals, by means of a carefully trained internal security establishment.” (Valdes 1989, 365). These ‘realisable’ goals included a ‘reasonable’ standard of living – i.e. keeping wages at the ‘market-determined’ level. “None of this was new (having been advocated by economic liberalism for decades), but the military regimes could deliver the one previously missing ingredient: labour discipline.” (Munck 1989, 49) By claiming that trade unionists’ activities threatened development and therewith national security, the military could ‘justify’ continued repression against them. Thus when General Videla stated in 1977 “We believe that today, having overcome the fundamental stage of establishing order, it is possible and necessary for us to open a dialogue with the whole community, a dialogue which will only exclude the corrupt, the economic criminal and the subversive criminal” (Munck 1989, 59), this was no relief for trade unionists. They could expect no reprieve from a military regime that saw them as impeding economic development, since “whatever claims [that regime] had to legitimacy were based substantially on economic performance” (Dix 1994, 447). Classified as ‘economic criminals’, they were excluded from Vileda’s ‘dialogue’ and ‘disappeared’ throughout the military regime, not merely in its initial phases.

Trade unionists were not the only victims under ‘softline’ themes of national security in Latin America. Critics of government economic policies often shared the same fate. To legitimise their repression, military regimes had to make the case that opposing government policies (rather than actually seeking to hinder their implementation) was in itself an act of treason which could endanger national security. This was accomplished by stressing the unique position to decide economic policy for the good of the nation that Latin American national security doctrines attributed to the military. Through New Professionalism, militaries claimed expertise in economic affairs. As “brain centers” of their organic nations (Lopez 1986, 81), they also claimed a “special and indeed unique identification with the ‘national interest’, an intuitive sense of what constituted the good of the nation” (Finer 1962, 35). Economic development and modernisation were thus declared the exclusive domain of the ruling elite: citizen participation was not warranted. “The duty of all good citizens [was] to work hard, enjoy the benefits of the forthcoming ‘economic modernization’ of the country, and beware that the ever-present risk of politicization, and thus of subversion, did not resurface again…” (G. O’Donnell, quoted in (Munck 1989, 63)). And if participation was portrayed as unnecessary, dissent was downright treason. “To fail to support the leader and the resultant system, then, [was] illogical in a practical sense, suicidal in an organic sense, and treason in a political sense.” (Lopez 1986, 82). Illogical,
suicidal, and treasonous, dissenters to government policies constituted a menace to national security whose elimination could be justified in the interest of the collective.

Latin American military regimes made ample use of the power the 'softline' discourse of national security gave them over their critics and those who obstructed (or seemed to obstruct) their economic policies. Their campaign against these adversaries could be as military (and as violent) as the campaign against suspected communists under a hardline conception of national security.

"The effort, obviously total, focuses on victory, without the possibility of rest or compromise until that goal is reached. The strategy entails... the annihilation of the enemy (under-development) and its army (those who propose alternative economic policies) and a control, as in all wars, of the political order and its liberties for the sake of the war effort. ...it identifies the numerous enemies for elimination... and provides that they (and suspected associates) be dealt with quickly and violently." (Lopez 1986, 86-87)

Thus emphasis on structural threats in Latin American national security regimes did not hinder the legitimation of human rights violations. There is little reason to suppose that the NNS's emphasis on structural threats should fare any better. It is simply erroneous to hold that by focussing on structural rather than agent-driven threats the question of trade-offs between individual rights and national security can be avoided. Structural dangers may not arise from human agency, but human agency can prevent the government from resolving these threats effectively. It is therefore possible to blame particular individuals for the persistence of a structural national security threat. These individuals are thereby declared to be part of the national security threat, and violations of their rights can thus be legitimised with reference to national security.

4.2.3.2. Inclusiveness

Proponents of the NNS argue that the issues identified as national security threats under the NNS reflect the security concerns of all members of the national community, and that therefore no individual has an incentive to act in ways which undermine national security. Thus it makes no sense to depict individuals as national security threats under the NNS. There are two objections to this argument.

First, it unrealistically assumes that all individuals' security interests will harmonise. Although the NNS recognises all individuals as part of the nation to be secured, each single individual is merely one among many others, and therefore his/her personal security can only constitute an infinitesimal component of 'national' security. In order to assert that that each individual's concerns will be reflected in the notion of national security, proponents of the NNS must assume that all individuals share the same security concerns, or at least that their security concerns are in harmony with each other. If this is not the case, the question of trade-offs arises. It may be necessary to sacrifice the security of an individual or a minority group in order to
increase overall levels of security may require. For example, farmers in the Amazon depend on slash-and-burn farming for their economic survival, but this technique harms the security of the wider population by destroying the rain forest. Protecting this national resource requires depriving these farmers of their means of subsistence. The fundamental problem, therefore, is one of aggregation. Although the NNS insists that every individual’s security concerns must be taken into account when elaborating a conception of national security, it cannot guarantee that all these concerns will actually be represented. A minority’s security concerns may clash with those of the majority. Within an NNS framework, unlike in a rights-based system, it is possible to justify sacrificing these minority concerns by arguing that the harm caused by this sacrifice is outweighed by the overall increase of security within the polity.

In short, therefore, aggregating individual security concerns into an overarching concept of national security is problematic. The assertion that every individual’s security concerns can be incorporated into the notion of national security within an NNS framework depends on the tenuous assumption that all individuals’ concerns will harmonise, so that the question of trade-offs among them does not arise. Where this stringent condition is not met, the process of aggregation will result in a notion of national security that contradicts the security interests of a minority. In this case, some individuals will have an incentive to act in ways that undermine national security, and may therefore be presented as national security threats.

The second objection concedes to the NNS the presumption of a basic harmony of security interests in a society, but argues that it is impossible to conclude from this assumption that no individual will ever be tempted to act against ‘national security’ in an NNS framework. Such a conclusion requires the additional assumption that all individuals are perfectly rational, and that no co-ordination problems arise. This second objection therefore echoes Rousseau’s recognition that “There is often a great deal of difference between the will of all and the general will; the latter regards only the common interest, while the former has regard to private interests and is merely the sum of particular wills” (Rousseau 1967, 30-31). Rousseau explained that individuals do not always will what is objectively in their best interest because they have become corrupted by human society and therefore alienated from their ‘real’ selves (O’Sullivan 1983, 61-62). A less metaphysical objection to the NNS, however, is simply that people are sometimes mistakenly concerned with one set of issues when in fact their security interests lie elsewhere. This can occur because they are ‘irrationally’ concerned with one particular danger to the exclusion of others. Subjective threat assessments, after all, do not necessarily coincide with objective dangers. Alternatively, individuals may simply have short time horizons and therefore be willing to sacrifice their long-term security for a short-term gain. An additional problem may the difficulty of establishing co-operation even among individuals who share basic

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146 It is possible to be very frightened in objectively safe situations (e.g. when walking down an unfamiliar street) but sanguine about dangerous ones (e.g. speeding on a mountain pass)
interests. In the absence of structures allowing individuals to co-ordinate their actions to pursue this common good, actors may pursue individually rational but socially sub-optimal strategies.\footnote{Economists refer to this problem as the "Tragedy of the Commons". In Theory of International Politics (Addison-Wesley, Reading, 1979), Kenneth Waltz terms it the Tyranny of Small decisions.}

Thus even if individuals share basic security interests, they may fail to act in ways that further these interests. Harmony of interests only guarantees that individuals will not act in ways that undermine national security if all individuals are strictly rational and if no co-ordination problems exist. Thus even the assumption of an essential harmony of interests does not allow proponents of the NNS to claim that it is impossible for individuals to act as a national security threat within an NNS framework.

Thus even within an NNS framework individuals may have an incentive to undermine national security. Where conflicting security interests exist in a society, the minority’s concerns may be overridden in the formulation of ‘national security’ priorities, giving this minority an incentive to act in ways that undermine national security. Furthermore, even if security interests harmonise, irrationality, short time horizons, or collective action problems may result in individual behaviour that is detrimental to national security. Proponents of the NNS must assume a polity whose members’ security interests harmonise and where all individuals are fully rational and co-operative in order to assert that under the NNS no individual has an incentive to act in ways that undermine national security. Where these stringent conditions are not met, individuals can plausibly be depicted as posing a national security threat. In all but utopian cases, therefore, the NNS remains capable of legitimating individual rights abuses.

4.2.4. Conclusion

At the societal level, the clash between liberal democracy and the discourse of national security has historically centred on individual rights. While liberal democrats assert that these rights are inviolate, the ONS legitimised violations of civil and human rights both in the West and in Latin America. Proponents of the NNS argue that such abuses of individuals’ rights cannot be legitimised under the NNS because of the profound reforms the concept of national security has undergone. They stress that the NNS focuses on structural rather than agent-driven threats, and that it deepens of the notion of national security to focus on population rather than state security. Therefore, individuals cannot credibly be depicted as either able or willing to undermine national security. Thus proponents of the NNS argue that it is impossible to legitimise violating individuals’ rights within a NNS framework.

Both arguments advanced by proponents of the NNS are flawed. First, while structural threats may not be caused by individuals, individuals can still be accused of hampering efforts to address these threats and
hence endangering national security. Experience with soft-line themes of national security in Latin America demonstrates that a focus on structural threats does not preclude the legitimation of human rights abuses.

Second, the deepening of the notion of national security presents aggregation problems. Unless one assumes a harmony of security interests among all members of the population, there is no guarantee that all individuals' security concerns will be represented in the notion of national security elaborated under the NNS. Minorities may, indeed, find that the national definition of security directly contradicts their personal security concerns. Moreover, even if a basic harmony of security interests could be assumed to exist, irrationality, short time horizons, or co-ordination problems might lead individuals to act contrary to national security.

Therefore the NNS cannot escape the charge that it can be used to legitimate human rights abuses. It does differ substantially from the ONS in the manner in which it conceives of national security, but these differences do not guarantee that individuals cannot be portrayed as able and willing to undermine national security.
4.3. Conclusion

The NNS differs substantially from the ONS. It proposes far-ranging changes to the way in which national security is to be conceived of by deepening the concept to include popular as well as state security and by widening it to focus on economic, social, and political, as well as military threats. These alterations are real and substantial. However, the NNS’s proponents must demonstrate not only that the NNS has a more attractive content than the ONS, but also that it does not generate the same legitimising effects.

History shows that the discourse of national security can be invoked to legitimise transgressions against liberal democracy at both the political institutional and the societal level. The ONS justified executive and military empowerment and legitimised human rights abuses. Proponents of the NNS argue that the notion cannot be used to justify such abridgements of liberal democracy. At the political level, they argue that the kinds of danger the NNS focuses on preclude legitimisation of executive empowerment because they are relatively unambiguous, do not require secret remedies, and provide no platform for delegitimising the opposition. Proponents of the NNS also hold that because the NNS stresses non-military threats its capacity to legitimise military empowerment the virtually nil. At the societal level, the NNS’s advocates apply two arguments, both of which are based on the recognition that the violation of individuals’ rights can only be legitimised if the individual is seen as a national security. First, they emphasise that because the NNS focuses on threats which do not arise through human agency, individuals cannot be portrayed as threatening national security. Second, they maintain that because the NNS includes the security of all individual members of a community in its definition of national security, no individual has any incentive to endanger national security within this framework. Thus for this reason, too, individuals cannot credibly be portrayed as national security threats.

At both the political institutional and the societal level, however, the arguments advanced by proponents of the NNS fail. Legitimation of executive empowerment remains possible because the NNS’s redefinition of the nature of national security threats does not overcome the problems of ambiguity, fails to prevent the justification of secrecy, and leaves leaders’ ability to co-opt and/or delegitimise the opposition intact. In addition, the legitimation of military empowerment would only be excluded under the NNS if the military had a rigidly defined sphere of competence. However, contemporary experience has shown that an emphasis on non-military threats cannot rule out military take-overs and indeed may indeed legitimise long-term military rule. At the societal level, the argument that a focus on structural threats guarantees the safety of the individual fails because both those impeding measures taken against structural threats and those who question the utility of these measures can be depicted as potential national security threats. Nor can it be held that the inclusive notion of national security advocated by the NNS eliminates any incentive for individuals to undermine national security. The focus on the security of an aggregate, however inclusively defined, almost always creates a minority whose particular security concerns are not adequately addressed. Moreover,
even if all individuals did share a set of common security interests, irrationality, short time horizons, and
difficulties of co-operation may lead to behaviour that undermines national security.

The failure of these arguments in defence of the NNS does not mean that the NNS will necessarily lead
to infringements of democratic procedure and the violation of individuals’ rights, nor has my argument been
that it lends itself to legitimising these abuses as easily as the ONS. What I have sought to make apparent is
simply that nothing in the NNS makes legitimising violations of liberal democracy impossible. Both at the
political institutional and at the societal level, the potential that illiberal and anti-democratic policies may be
justified as necessary for national security remains. Thus the radical changes made to the concept of national
security in the 1990s have not been radical enough. Reform has not made the NNS safe for liberal
democracies.
CONCLUSION:
The Failure of Redefinition

This thesis has shown that the New Notion of National Security (NNS), which has become dominant in South Africa, is not a safe discourse to adopt in a liberal democracy.

The argument began by elucidating the concept of liberal democracy. As Chapter 1 has argued, liberal democracy is based on the assertion that the human individual is the ultimate unit of political and moral value. From this basis, liberal democrats espouse individual liberty and assert the fundamental equality of all human beings. The liberal democratic state is constructed to reflect and embody this commitment. Equality and liberty are affirmed through such institutions as universal suffrage, equality before the law, and the equal recognition of citizens' human, civic, and political and rights. However, liberal democrats do not trust the state, perceiving it instead as a potential threat to the individual. Therefore, in addition to creating institutions that positively embody liberty and equality, liberal democrats advocate measures that function negatively to prevent the violation of these principles. Power is entrusted to elected officials held accountable by regular elections, and the liberal democratic state is limited in scope and internally divided. The separation of powers induces the various bodies of government to check and balance each other. Although this leads to some inefficiency in decision-making, liberal democrats hold that the separation of power ultimately benefits citizens by preserving their liberty.

This thesis then described the global evolution of the notion of national security in Chapter 2 and provided a more detailed case study of this evolution in South Africa in Chapter 3. The discussion noted that during the Cold War the Old Notion of National Security (ONS) legitimated state policies that ran counter to the liberal democratic tradition at both the political institutional and the societal level. Chapter 2 described how, both in the West and in Latin America, the ONS served to justify military empowerment, the concentration of power within the executive, and the violation of individuals' rights by the state. Chapter 3 focused in more detail on similar trends in the South African experience. Chapters 2 and 3 also showed that, despite these experiences, the rhetoric of national security has not been abandoned in the post-Cold War era. Instead, theorists and policy-makers have sought to modernise and reform the national security paradigm, appropriating the discourse of national security to promote a new agenda of social and communal welfare focusing on structural threats to popular security. Chapter 2 documented these reform efforts both in the West and in the South. It showed how reformers have 'deepened' the notion of national security by focusing on popular as well as state security and 'widened' it by including economic and social concerns among possible national security threats. These are radical innovations earned the new paradigm the appellation of New Notion of National Security (NNS). Chapter 3 provided a more detailed case study of the NNS in South Africa. It described how South Africa has followed the general trend towards reforming rather than abandoning the rhetoric of national security and analysed the processes which led to its adoption of a
Southern NNS focusing primarily on underdevelopment, crime, and illegal immigration as threats to popular security.

Finally, Chapter 4 investigated whether the infringements of liberal democracy legitimised under the ONS could still be justified under the NNS. It argued that despite claims to the contrary by proponents of the NNS, the deepening and widening of the notion of national security has not eliminated its capacity to legitimise abridgements of liberal democracy at both the political institutional and the societal level. The chapter showed that the NNS’s focus on non-military threats could not to preclude legitimation of military empowerment. It also found that legitimation of executive empowerment remained possible under the NNS, because the focus on social and economic national security threats does not prevent leaders from justifying secrecy, manipulating threat perceptions, and delegitimising the opposition. In addition, the chapter argued that neither the NNS’s focus on structural threats nor its inclusive definition of national security could guarantee that individuals could not credibly be portrayed as national security threats under the NNS. The scope for legitimising human and civic rights abuses thus also remains despite the efforts to reform the notion of national security.

In sum, therefore, despite the reform efforts of the 1990s, the NNS remains capable of legitimising the same infringements of liberal democracy as the ONS. Despite a very extensive reform effort, proponents of the NNS have failed to elaborate a notion of national security that can safely be adopted in a liberal democracy. Their resounding failure suggests that their project may have been inherently flawed. Proponents of the NNS regarded the critical problem of the ONS to have been its contents, i.e. its Cold War setting and its tendency to equate national security with state security. The main challenge of the post-Cold War era was therefore to reform this content by widening and deepening it. Proponents of the NNS sought to harness the language of national security for more socially beneficial purposes. Labelling disease and poverty as national security threats, for example, would force governments redirect resources towards social welfare and economic development. In their quest for a better notion of national security, however, these reformers never considered that the concept of ‘national security’ might be inherently incompatible to liberal democracy.

In fact, however, there are two fundamental differences between liberal democracy and the discourse of national security. First, the liberal democracy is essentially procedural, whereas the discourse of national security is goal-oriented. Second, in the liberal democratic tradition the individual takes precedence over the collective, whereas a national security discourse implies the opposite priorities. Examining these two dichotomies allows one to understand why the attempt to redefine ‘national security’ in a way that would exclude legitimising violations of liberal democracy was doomed to failure.
1. The First Fundamental Conflict between ‘National Security’ and Liberal Democracy: 
   Goal vs. Procedure

Liberal democracy is characterised by a strong emphasis on procedure over outcome. It is not purely 
procedural, since such institutions as the universal rule of law, the protection of individual rights, and the 
separation counterbalance and constrain the electoral process. Certain kinds of laws and policies are 
prohibited because they are incompatible with the principles of liberal democracy, even if they are 
promulgated by duly elected and accountable representatives. However, liberal democracy is essentially 
procedural: as long as they are compatible with the basic tenets of liberal democracy, the content of laws and 
policies is secondary to their manner of adoption. In the liberal democratic tradition, reaching a political 
decision democratically matters more than making the ‘right’ decision. This liberal democratic commitment 
to respect individuals qua autonomous agents “‘The claim [for democracy] is most persuasively put,’ 
Michael Walzer says, ‘not in terms of what people know, but in terms of who they are” (Murphy 1993, 4). It 
also reflects liberal democrats’ fear of the state, whose power threatens the liberty of the individuals living 
under it. As Chapter 1 argued, liberal democratic procedures are expressly constructed to curb this power and 
control how it can be exercised by those in office. State power is divided and subjected to multiple checks 
and balances in order to prevent the concentration of power in the hands of any one group of individuals. 
This makes the political process complex and cumbersome, but the liberal democratic state is thus 
purposefully inefficient: for liberal democrats, safeguarding individuals’ liberty is more important than 
maximising state efficiency towards any specific goal.

By contrast, the discourse of national security can be understood as part of the modern tradition of goal- 
oriented or “activist” politics, a tradition that O’Sullivan traces back to Rousseau. For Rousseau, the primary 
purpose of politics was to help the individual regain the liberty he had lost through socialisation. He 
suggests that that the importance of following democratic procedure pales in comparison with the goal of 
freedom. Indeed, he implies that the degenerative effects of socialisation may even make following 
democratic procedure immoral: Since the alienated individual’s preferences do not reflect his/her best 
interests, they should be ignored in order to achieve the ultimate social good, i.e. the freedom of all 
individuals in society. As Rousseau put it, men must be “forced to be free”. The idea that politics should be 
oriented towards a goal rather than restricted by a procedure had an immense impact on subsequent thinkers: 
“It was this new theory which imparted to European political thought an activist impulse which had hitherto 
been lacking.” (O’Sullivan 1983, 41-42).

The discourse of national security shares this goal-orientation. ‘National security’, in Thomas Nagel’s 
terminology, it is a ‘thick’ concept: like ‘cruel’, ‘treacherous’, or ‘courageous’, it contains a normative as 
well as a descriptive component (McDowell 1978). ‘National security’ is by definition valuable and
important and should be protected. A national security threat, as environmental lobbyists in South Africa discovered to their detriment\(^{149}\), can only be an urgent issue that poses an immediate danger to a large group of people, and resists resolution by ordinary means. Conversely, labelling a matter a ‘national security threat’ is equivalent to issuing an urgent request for action. Proponents of the NNS can hardly deny this fact, since it is essential to their project of reorienting national agendas away from military concerns and towards structural issues undermining popular welfare. They enlist the discourse of national security precisely because calling something a national security threat implies that something must urgently be done about it. Some proponents of the NNS even explicitly admit, as Nathan does, that “defining a problem as a national security issue [thus] automatically legitimises the use of exceptional means in response to that problem” (Nathan 1992, 24). What they do not recognise is that such exceptional means may also be illiberal or anti-democratic means, and that the very goal orientation of their discourse stands in fundamental conflict to the essentially procedural nature of liberal democracy.

Goal-orientation has also leads members of the activist tradition to adopt a more positive attitude towards state power than liberal democrats. “Within a [liberal democratic] limited style of politics power is always regarded as an object of suspicion... Within the new activist style of politics, by contrast, power is no longer thought of as intrinsically suspect” (O’Sullivan 1983, 36). Members of the activist tradition view state power as a resource that may be harnessed towards the goal they posit. This valuable resource should therefore be nurtured and increased rather than stunted and checked: a strong and efficient state in the service of a social goal is preferable to a weak and divided one. By implication, the restraints that liberal democracy places on the state are an unnecessary obstacle that can and should be removed. Thus the activist tradition is intrinsically opposed to liberal democratic political institutions.

This indicates that the conflict between liberal democracy and the discourse of national security at the political institutional level is a fundamental one, which cannot be eliminated by simply changing the contents of a particular notion of national security. Regardless of how it is defined, national security must be secured and national security threats must be eliminated. Liberal democratic institutions, however, are designed to be inefficient. The appeal to national security therefore legitimises abridging or suspending these institutions. Both executive and military empowerment are ultimately justifiable because concentration of power makes the state a more efficient instrument to be used in the pursuit of the goal of national security. Therefore the reform of the content of the discourse proposed by the NNS cannot guarantee a change in its potential legitimising effect.

\(^{148}\) As Rousseau famously declares in the Social Contract “Man was born free, and everywhere he is in chains”.
\(^{149}\) See chapter 3, section II.2.4.
2. The Second Fundamental Conflict between ‘National Security’ and Liberal Democracy: Society vs. the Individual

As Chapter 1 emphasised, the liberal democratic tradition is built around the notion of the inherent value of the autonomous individual. "Recognizing groups and not individuals as the primary unit of politics, and as source and repository of rights, is illiberal to the core" (Jung 1998, 2). In the liberal democratic tradition, the individual is prior to the group rather than subordinate to it. The essential notion in liberal democratic theory is that of a contract of individuals to form a society, and even in Hobbes's (pre-liberal, and certainly not democratic) formulation of this contract, the individual is not required to – and indeed cannot – give up his most basic right to life. Liberal society is thus traditionally viewed as constituted of individuals who have and exercise rights that are prior to and independent of society. This society, furthermore, is no more than the sum of its parts: it does not have a ‘value’ beyond the aggregate ‘worth’ of each of its members. Therefore, in the liberal democratic tradition no individual can be sacrificed in the name of the group. Each individual has inalienable rights, which can be brought into question if they conflict with other individuals’ rights but cannot legitimately be violated to promote the well-being of a group. "Rights are best understood as trumps over some background justification for political decisions that states a goal for the community as a whole".

Some liberals may accept that a certain kind of society is desirable and should be promoted, but no liberal democrat can accept that such a society should be fostered at the expense of individual rights.

Communitarianism challenges the liberal democratic tradition on this point. Among modern communitarians in particular, two kinds of criticism are common. The first is normative: communitarians maintain that by glorifying the individual outside of, and in opposition to, society, liberalism fosters selfish, irresponsible, and unfulfilled people. Sandel, for example, argues that the self proposed by liberalism, "unencumbered" by non-voluntary, constitutive attachments, "is not... an ideally free and rational agent, but... a person wholly without character, without moral depth" (Sandel 1992, 23). The second kind of criticism is metaphysical: it argues that the individual portrayed by liberalism is not only undesirable but actually cannot exist (Avineri and de-Shalit 1992). Taylor, for example, argues that the very thing liberals value - the autonomous individual - cannot exist outside the social context (Taylor 1992). For him, autonomy

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151. Raz, for example, argues that because "a person’s well-being depends to a large extent on success in socially defined and determined pursuits and activities", "the government has an obligation to create an environment providing individuals with an adequate range of options and the opportunities to use them". (Raz 1986, 309, 417)

152. Communitarianism is an ancient political tradition whose proponents include Aristotle, Cicero, St. Augustine, Aquinas, Burke, Rousseau, and Hegel (Avineri and de-Shalit 1992, 1). All its diverse theorists agree, however, on the essential priority of the community over the individual or, in Rousseaian terms, the common good over the individual right (Sandel 1992).

153. This argument is not new: Rousseau, for example, charged that a society of individuals enslaves men, bringing out the worst in them and creating "a community of secret enemies" (Melzer 1995, 1087). Later, Marx complained that "none of the supposed rights of man... go beyond the egoistic man... that is, an individual separated from the community, withdrawn into himself, wholly preoccupied with his private interest and acting with his private caprice" (Birch 1993, 120).
is a potential which can only be developed within a social context presenting a range of possible choices and encouraging diversity (Taylor 1992, 35). Society therefore precedes the autonomous individual, who cannot exist without it. Both criticisms essentially argue that liberals undervalue society. The socially independent individual is at best undesirable and at worst a myth. Society is necessary to allow the autonomous individual to live a meaningful and valuable life. The individual is more complete through her membership in society, or, in other words, society is more than the sum of its individual parts. If it is only within society that the individual can live a valuable life, however, the notion of the individual as holder of inalienable rights against society must be reconsidered. Because everybody’s life is enriched by the existence of a common society, no one individual can be ceded a right to destroy that society. Thus the rights of each individual must be subordinated to the good and the survival of society as a whole. Consequently, communitarians argue that the primary duty of the state is to protect society as a whole, and only thereafter seek to secure the rights of each individual living within it.

The discourse of national security is inherently communitarian. It not only focuses on a collective good but also makes that good the primary focus of state action. “National security implies strongly that the object of security is the nation” (Buzan 1994) – and although there is some controversy about what constitutes a nation154, it is by definition a collective entity. Thus a concern with national security is necessarily a concern with the security of a collective body. In itself, such a concern is not incompatible with liberal democracy. Liberal democrats can, and often do, value and seek to protect the collective. However, they insist that the primary moral and political unit is the individual, who must therefore be the primary beneficiary of state action. The discourse of national security, by contrast, implies that the proper object of state action is the collective good of national security. At the very heart of the notion is a commitment to the collective, the national, into which the individual is subsumed. This characteristic of the national security discourse cannot be overcome simply by redefining who the collective is. Although the NNS redefines ‘national’ security inclusively as the security of a country’s population, the assumption of ‘national security’s’ essentially collective character necessarily remains. The NNS thus retains the same focus on the collective as the ONS, a focus that necessarily subordinates the individual to the group even if it includes him/her in this group.

This focus not only runs theoretically counter to liberal democracy’s insistence on the primacy of the individual, but also implies that the tension between liberal democracy and national security at the societal level is inevitable. A national security discourse is by nature in conflict with any affirmation of the primacy of individual rights. The very terminology it adopts implies that in the case of opposition between the individual to the collective, the former can and should be sacrificed for the benefit of the latter: the prioritisation of the collective translates into legitimation of the sacrifice of the individual if and when this

154 Ignatieff, for example, distinguishes between ethnic and civic nationalism, and thus between nations which are built around historical or ethnic ties on the one hand and common political institutions (including the physical/political entity of the state or country itself) on the other. (Ignatieff 1994)
sacrifice is seen as furthering national security. In sharp contrast to the liberal democratic tradition, the individual is not paramount, and his/her security is at best part of and at worst opposed to national security.

Thus the discourse of national security is intrinsically at odds with the liberal democratic tradition. Its communitarian focus on the primacy of the collective allows the state to legitimate violations of individuals' rights. This communitarian focus is inherent to the concept of national security, and therefore any national security discourse is capable of legitimising human rights abuses. Thus, at the societal as well as the political institutional level, the reform of the content of the national security discourse proposed by the NNS cannot guarantee a change in its potential legitimising effect.

The project proposed by advocates of the NNS is therefore fundamentally flawed. The discourse of national security is intrinsically at odds with the liberal democratic tradition in two respects. First, it belongs to the tradition of new activist politics, which stands in contradiction with the liberal democratic tradition because it posits the superior importance of goal over procedure and therefore favours strengthening rather than weakening the state. This suggests that the discourse of national security, however radically reformed, will always remain capable of legitimising infringements of liberal democracy at the political institutional level. Second, the rhetoric of national security is inherently communitarian, affirming the central importance of the collective over the individual. Consequently, no amount of reform can be expected to eliminate the potential of the notion of national security to legitimise abuses of individuals' rights by the government. The discourse of national security is inherently able to justify infractions of liberal democracy at the societal level.

3. Implications for South Africa

Because the discourse of national security is thus inherently at odds with liberal democracy, the adoption of the NNS in South Africa thus presents a considerable risk to the country's budding liberal democracy. As Chapter 4 has shown, some abridgements of liberal democracy have already occurred at the level of political institutions. More fundamentally, even though the discourse may not cause or immediately entail the full abrogation of liberal democracy, it generates the preconditions for such change by allowing for its legitimisation. It gives anti-democratic forces in either the government or the military the tools with which to begin renegotiating the terms of the state's social contract with its citizens. Having taken over the language of the ONS, the NNS retains the legitimising effects that go with the language. The concept of 'national security' has goal-orientated and communitarian connotations that cannot simply be reformed out of existence. The danger incurred by proponents of the NNS in South Africa who refuse to recognise this fact is that others may make use of their concepts in ways they do not intend – for example to legitimise executive
empowerment, military rule, or human rights abuses by the government. By formulating and promoting the NNS, they creating a Trojan horse for opponents of liberal democracy to introduce into their countries' national discourse. They should not be surprised to find, as Vale does, that "Security is still 'devilish'... With few exceptions, those shaping national security issues are still working from the same old script..." (Vale, 1997). This script is provided for them by the proponents of the NNS themselves.

This does not mean that the agenda set by proponents of the NNS must also be abandoned. Poverty, crime, and illegal immigration are serious national issues - as, for that matter, are AIDS, social inequality, and inadequate access to education and healthcare. Cloaking these concerns in the language of national security, however, carries unacceptable risks. They can and should be recognised as important in their own right. Liberal democracy has its own discourse through which issues affecting popular welfare can be promoted: the discourse of state obligations to its individual citizens. These individuals have a right to life and healthcare, to education and to private property. It is the duty of the state to protect these rights as far as it is able, and to do so equally for all its citizens. The language of individual rights - which the South African government has recognised, and which are enshrined both in the South African Constitution and in international documents like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - is sufficiently strong to promote and demand state attention to social and economic issues affecting the personal security of its citizens. It is not necessary to cloak these demands in national security terminology, and neither is it desirable: South Africa faces enough challenges on its road to consolidated liberal democracy without imposing an additional one upon itself.
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