For Greater Inclusion and Diversity in International Security: Courses of Action for the Network for Strategic Analysis

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Introduction

From academia to politics, issues of inclusion and diversity are gaining increasing importance in different spheres of Canadian society. In international security, the debate on diversity is not new. However, the field of study still struggles to adopt a reflective stance and the production of knowledge remains dominated by the Eurocentric point of view. In international security practice, while diverse and inclusive programs and policies have gained momentum in recent years, they are not, however, free from bias. Aware of these tensions, the Network for Strategic Analysis (NSA), halfway between the academic world and the world of practitioners, has adopted a strategy of intersectionality for framing diversity and inclusion in its activities.

In the same spirit and wanting to be complementary to this strategy, this report provides an overview of current debates on diversity and inclusion in the studies and practice of international security. The report then presents a series of proposals aimed at promoting diversity, inclusion and a culture of equity in NSA activities. In doing so, this report seeks to promote a more inclusive and accessible debate on the study and practice of international security by adopting a diverse perspective and advancing the democratization of a debate too often dominated by certain groups and perspectives.

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Diversity and Inclusion in International Security: State of Affairs

Diversity refers to the unique dimensions and qualities of each individual. Inclusion refers to the establishment of a collective culture of fairness and respect for difference. Historically, Western white males have dominated the study and practice of international security. Even today, many biases related to Eurocentrism, race, and gender hamper the inclusion of greater diversity in international security.

Eurocentrism favors the Western point of view and tends to exclude other worldviews. In the extreme, it implies the superiority of Western civilization. For example, state sovereignty and the Westphalian international system, two key concepts in international relations, are based on the idea that nineteenth-century Europe had reached a state superior to non-European regions, that were perceived as uncivilized. These problematic ideas are still found at the heart of some peacebuilding and state institution building programs of recent decades, which emphasize central state institutions at the expense of local governance mechanisms.

The deconstruction of power relations around gender and race in the theory and practice of international security is at the heart of the work of feminists in international relations and specialists in critical race theory. Feminist theories in international relations explore an inclusive approach to maximize the safety of all. These approaches consider race and gender as organizing elements of international relations, essential for the perception of security threats as well as for the formulation of foreign and defense policies. However, even if feminist researchers and specialists in critical race theories seek to deconstruct binary oppositions (male/female, white/black, North/South), themes related to gender and race are seldom integrated into the more traditional and often central discussions of strategic studies. Gender and race are also rarely combined in the same analysis.

While critical security studies appear to provide the space to discuss issues of diversity in research, they are not immune to the biases that make it difficult to adopt an inclusive stance. For example, critical security studies in Canada focus on the production of security-related knowledge through different themes: post-colonialism and Indigenous peoples, environmental security, immigration and borders, human security and global governance. In particular, Inuit peoples conceive of climate change and threats to social cohesion as security issues, which leads to a conception of Arctic security articulated around environmental protection, the preservation of cultural identity, and Indigenous political autonomy. However, these approaches do not always escape Eurocentrism: they tend to marginalize indigenous knowledge. For example, the strategy of resurgence, central to Indigenous self-determination, revolves around questioning the Canadian state. However, the enhancement of Indigenous traditions has gendered elements and stereotypical sexual representations that are not taken into account. Not only is it difficult to aspire to inclusion without considering the perspectives of all Canadians, but Indigenous knowledge presents conceptions of security that are complementary

to existing critical discussions, particularly with respect to human security.

An intersectional approach that takes into account a range of identity factors makes it possible to question some of these biases, while promoting both diversity and inclusion. Intersectionality is not just limited to research, however, and plays an important role in developing and implementing inclusive, equitable and effective practices.

Diversity and Inclusion in International Security Practice

The biases causing exclusion and homogeneity are also reproduced in international security practice. Although diversity is increasingly considered in the development of foreign policy objectives and in international organizations, its integration is uneven. Likewise, the various inclusion efforts within international organizations and the armed forces have focused on mainstreaming gender perspectives, sometimes neglecting other identity factors.

The Concept of Human Security

The concept of human security, developed in the 1990s, represents both one of the most promising avenues for an inclusive foreign policy and an obstacle to diversity. The concept offers security focused on the individual rather than the state, and revolves around traditional and unconventional threats like climate change and poverty.

During the 1990s, the United Nations (UN) and countries like Canada favored an approach focused on peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and the creation of international standards promoting the protection of human rights to ensure human security. The concept ran out of steam in the 2000s, but its principles remain current. In particular, the responsibility to protect, which calls on countries to intervene to prevent crimes against humanity, justified NATO's intervention in Libya in 2011. The discourse of human security is embodied today in political, activist and research programs that put forward the protection of vulnerable populations, the consideration of children in armed conflicts, and the Women, Peace, and Security agenda. By putting individuals' experiences of conflict at the forefront, the different applications of human security make it possible to target insecurities in times of conflict that a conventional approach to security cannot capture, such as gender issues or the issues of child soldiers.

Despite its inclusive potential, the concept of human security is worrying. As with human rights and other universalizing liberal norms, the danger remains that particular issues will disappear under the general label of human

security. Indeed and paradoxically, the diverse experiences of different groups risk being overlooked in the pursuit of security for all. Inclusive practices are therefore those that manage to balance respect for diversity with existing standards.

The Global Agenda on Women, Peace and Security

The inclusive practices of international organizations and some armed forces tend to focus on gender equality, often ignoring other identity factors. Since the advent of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000 and the development of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, the UN, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the African Union (AU) and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), among others, have deployed gender-based approaches that promote inclusion. These approaches combine different strategies such as gender balancing, aiming for greater representation of women, and the systemic integration of gender perspectives (gender mainstreaming). These are meant to be inclusive, but often rely on operational efficiency rather than fairness and equality as their primary rationale. Indeed, several security organizations consider that integrating more women and gender perspectives into operations improves their effectiveness.

The UN, promoting gender balance, seeks to increase the number of women in peacekeeper contingents to a minimum of 15%. For its part, NATO has created gender advisory positions and considers gender at every stage of operational planning. Both organizations cite the unique qualities of women, including their communication skills and their ability to bond with local women and children, as helping to improve their effectiveness. The African Union (AU) integrates gender issues into the training of members of the Department of Peace and Security, the AU body responsible for regional peacekeeping operations. For example, raising awareness on the use of rape as a weapon of war as well as the disarmament and reintegration of male, female, and child combatants are integrated into the training of soldiers. As part of the Canadian government's Elsie Initiative, the CAF seeks to increase the number of women in peace operations, citing both gender equality and operational effectiveness as goals.

While invoking effectiveness is an influential way of convincing military commanders, this approach risks gender instrumentalization. Many feminists and peace activists are concerned that operational effectiveness, and not gender equality per se, will become the end goal. In particular, they denounce the [militarization of the global agenda](#) on women, peace and security. Other intellectuals, policymakers and military professionals [argue](#) that such militarization is necessary: gender equality can hardly be pursued if basic security conditions are not established.

All in all, if the diversity strategies of these organizations have made significant progress in the area of gender, they do not give as much space to other identity factors such as ethnicity or sexual orientation, hence the importance of conceptualizing diversity by applying the [concept of intersectionality](#).

Diversity and Inclusion: Recommendations for the NSA

The [NSA strategy of intersectionality](#) makes it possible to target how different aspects of a person's identity – sex, gender, religion, sexual orientation or race – create different relationships of power and subordination in their experience of reality. It seeks "to ensure that intersectionality is present in the collective work produced by researchers from the Network for Strategic Analysis and that this work reflects a great diversity and the inclusion of under-represented groups". In doing so, the NSA is better equipped to ensure greater representation in its work and activities. The rest of this section proposes a series of measures to implement this strategy in order to create an inclusive network. Beyond its intrinsic value, an inclusive and diverse approach can generate several benefits. In order to promote diversity and inclusion in research as well as in activities, the NSA should focus on the following three priorities.

1. Favor inclusive and diversified avenues of research. Through the mobilization of defense and security research, it would be possible for the NSA to rethink research questions, favor the diversity of theoretical and methodological approaches, and balance the importance given to the different aspects of the field. First, rethinking research questions in an inclusive way involves evaluating whether the research question contributes to the consolidation of a culture of fairness and respect for difference. Does the question prioritize certain issues? Who are the groups of people targeted by the research project? Second, employing a variety

of research methods and theoretical approaches promotes a greater diversity of perspectives and issues. Participatory or community-based research methods are good examples of research methods that can be more inclusive. Theoretical approaches that question the balance of power such as feminist studies, critical race theory, constructivism and postcolonialism should also be used or, at least, taken into account.

In addition, ensuring a greater representation in the bibliography of the work carried out and published by the NSA and using an inclusive vocabulary are other ways of emphasizing diversity in research.

Finally, the importance given to different aspects of international security should be considered. A broader definition of the field of study and practice allows for greater emphasis on issues of gender, race, intersectionality and diversity within the three axes of the NSA. In addition, the NSA should ensure representation of this work and perspectives in its main events such as the annual conference, while providing privileged spaces to discuss these issues through a series of events. Such an approach will promote greater equity in the production of knowledge and the influence enjoyed by researchers and practitioners associated with the network.

Advantages: At the level of international security research, a pro-diversity and inclusive approach makes it possible to reconcile central and critical discourses. The exploration of different research methods and theoretical approaches has the potential to spark new debates, foster the production of more

representative and inclusive knowledge, and generate new angles of research while reaching out to a larger community.

2. Explore knowledge sharing formats that favor diversity and inclusion. The policy, strategy and hot spots published by the network provide a platform that has the potential to highlight under-represented groups and voices in international security in Canada and beyond. During its events, the NSA should also pay particular attention to the representation of diversity.

To do this, the network could approach individuals who have particular expertise on topical issues, but who often find themselves outside the usual networks. By reaching out to individuals outside of government, academia, or industry, the NSA could expand its audience while facilitating access to publication and public debate for often marginalized groups. For example, it would be interesting to invite representatives of Indigenous communities to discuss northern and arctic security issues, or food security related to fisheries.

It is also important to take into account cultural differences in the dissemination of knowledge. For example, some formats, such as an interview or a fireside chat, are better suited to disseminating the knowledge of some Indigenous leaders than a traditional academic panel. The adoption of communications mediums like video conferencing, forced by the COVID-19 pandemic, is helping democratize access to conversations about security issues. However, it remains important to make efforts to make these virtual events accessible, for example by offering subtitles or simultaneous

narration. In addition, these events should be announced through different networks and be available offline.

Advantages: The dissemination of research through the various activities of the NSA would benefit from prioritizing diversity and inclusion. Knowledge sharing formats that value diversity and inclusion better reflect NSA clients and audiences. Likewise, a greater representation of diversity maximizes recognition of talent and security expertise, promotes different and varied perspectives, and helps to create a positive and inclusive space where all are comfortable expressing themselves.

3. Apply the principles of diversity and inclusion in activities with partners. The NSA should extend the principles of diversity and inclusion to its relationships with its partners, while seeking to forge partnerships with organizations that can actively contribute to a diverse and respectful debate on security issues. The NSA would thus be able to count on a broader expertise on various subjects and the organizations benefit in return from the visibility offered by the network. In addition, the NSA should ensure that the benefits arising from relations with its partners are reciprocal. Finally, the NSA should make sure to engage with partners who also promote diversity and inclusion within their own organizations.

Advantages: Requiring diversity and inclusion efforts broadens and enriches the conversation between academia, politics, and the military. The NSA can position itself as a leader in diversity and inclusion in the defense and

security community, thereby creating a positive
ripple effect for those in this community.