# ON★TRACK

## Challenges and Opportunities for Integrating Gender Perspectives in Military Education:

*Experiences from the US and Canada*

*Volume 33 | September 2024*

# ON TRACK

## Volume 33 | September 2024

ON TRACK is the official journal of the CDA Institute. Through its pages, the CDA Institute promotes informed public debate on security and defence issues and the vital role played by the Canadian Armed forces in society. ON TRACK facilitates this educational mandate by featuring a range of articles that explore security, defence, and strategic issues that may have an impact on the Canadian strategic interests and on the safety of its citizens. The views expressed in ON TRACK are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the CDA Institute.

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## Grazia Scoppio, PhD
### Lead Guest Editor

While the study of gender originated within the field of women's studies, over the years more courses on gender have emerged within other disciplinary programs such as education, political science, psychology, history and literature. In addition, military education programs now include gender topics in core curricula as well as gender courses among their offerings. This change in the military educational context can be attributed to the recognition by the international defence community, of the importance of adopting a gender perspective across security and peacekeeping missions. This recognition did not occur overnight, but rather it evolved over the years stemming from several events, starting from the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, at the United Nations (UN) Fourth World Conference on Women where it was acknowledged that "inequalities between women and men have persisted and major obstacles remain, with serious consequences for the well-being of all people."[1] Five years later, a landmark resolution was adopted by the UN Security Council namely UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) expressing concern about the adverse impact of armed conflict on women and children and recognizing the pivotal role of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution as well as peace-building.[2] The resolution called member states to action including: mainstreaming a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations; increasing representation of women at all levels of decision-making; taking special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence; implementing gender-sensitive training, as well as training on the particular needs of women. UNSCR 1325 was followed by nine related resolutions, referred collectively as the WPS agenda. Similarly, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) also acknowledged through various policies and action plans, "the disproportionate impact that conflict has on women and girls, the vital roles women play in peace and security, and the importance of incorporating gender perspectives in all that the Alliance does."[3] NATO's WPS policy also stresses the importance of education and training to raise awareness on UNSCR 1325 and change behaviours and mindsets.[4] With this backdrop in mind, we present this special issue aiming to contribute unique dimensions to the existing literature on integrating gender perspectives in military education by looking at this important topic through different lenses. Our five articles illustrate experiences from Canadian and American educators using multidisci-

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1      United Nations, "Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action," (1995), https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf

2      United Nations, "Resolution 1325," (2000), https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/720/18/PDF/N0072018.pdf?OpenElement

3      North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Women Peace and Security," (2023), https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_91091.htm

4      North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "NATO/EAPC Policy for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and related resolutions," (2014), https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_109830.htm

plinary and intersectional perspectives to teach gender to military personnel at different levels of learning. While we focus on officers' education, the topics discussed would be relevant to enlisted personnel/ Non-commissioned Members.

In the first article, Sarah Hill shares her experience teaching the course "Psychology of Gender in the Military" to Officer Cadets and Naval Cadets in their final year of undergraduate study at the Royal Military College of Canada, in Kingston, Ontario. The course provides the opportunity for young future officers of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) to study academic literature about gender, think critically about gender as well as explore their own personal experiences. The feedback from the students indicates the course is well received. Students particularly appreciate the discussions although some have found the seminar format challenging which has led the instructor to introduce more "mini-lectures" to provide more explanations for complex concepts and frameworks. Hill concludes that based on her experience, the course provides a good foundation for these future officers to address questions of gender that will arise during their careers.

The second article presents this author's experience developing and teaching the graduate level course "Gender Perspectives in Defence and Security Contexts" an elective in the Joint Command and Staff Program and the Master of Defence Studies, at the Canadian Forces College, in Toronto, Ontario. The students of this interdisciplinary seminar course are senior officers of all three Branches of the CAF. The impetuses for the course were concurrently the author's own research in this domain, the context of sexual misconduct in the CAF and the institutional thrust. The students' feedback both formal and informal has been positive and students feel better prepared for their future responsibilities in their careers including at the operational level and at the institutional level to lead culture change in the CAF.

Next, Sonya Finley discusses her experience at the National Defence University (NDU) in Washington D.C., teaching "Competitive Communication Strategies" a graduate level elective course to senior military officers and executive branch civilians. The course allows students to analyze public opinion and develop communication strategies by using multiple instruments of power to influence people's attitudes and behaviors in support of strategic goals. The course adopts an ABCDEF framework (Audience-Behavior-Content-Delivery-Engagement-Follow Up) as well as a multidisciplinary social network theory. Additionally, the course integrates gender perspectives in terms of a critical examination of the roles and experiences of women in societies, evolving towards promoting equal participation of all genders in developing security challenges solutions. The integration of gender perspectives contributes to students' understanding of war and conflict, as well as national security strategies.

Mariya Omelicheva uses reflective writing in her elective course "Women, Peace and Security: Gender Perspectives in National Security", also part of the offerings at NDU, which aims to enhance students' understanding of security through gender perspectives. Omelicheva proposes a broader understanding of critical thinking as contextual, inquisitive and reflective thinking, including the adoption of gender perspectives to foster critical thinking more broadly. She argues that providing instruction on gender coupled with reflective writing can cultivate critical thinking, and illustrates an exercise in reflective thinking used during her gender and security course. Integrating gender-sensitive perspectives allows students to engage in meaningful self-reflection and understand the different responsibilities that women and men are expected to fulfil based on socially constructed gender roles. Using reflective writing jointly with a gender perspective allows students to look through a gender sensitive lens, identify biases, structural barriers, and

gendered differences in various security contexts.

Lauren Mackenzie concludes our special issue with examples from her experience teaching about WPS at the Marine Corps University (MCU) in Quantico, Virginia. Drawing from relational dialectics theory, she shares her strategies to manage tensions and resistant reactions to WPS by students and faculty, by framing resistance to WPS as opportunities to learn, attempting to identify the root causes of such resistance, and articulating how to acknowledge the resistance. Mackenzie provides examples of tensions she experienced when introducing WPS to MCU students and faculty as well as some of resistant reactions, and illustrates how she uses storytelling to introduce WPS, recognizing it is reasonable to have complex reactions to WPS and how she pairs to a US Marine Corps Colonel to provide concrete examples to operationalize WPS. In the conclusion, Mackenzie reminds us of the key role of men in WPS efforts and on the importance for instructors to be ready to anticipate and manage reactions to WPS.

These five articles, collectively, highlight the opportunities and challenges of integrating gender topics and frameworks into a wide spectrum of military education programs using interdisciplinary approaches, to better prepare military personnel for complex security and peacekeeping operations. Indeed, the WPS agenda that was designed to illuminate the pivotal role of women in conflict prevention, conflict management, and sustainable peace effort relies, in part, on military education institutions for its implementation. It is our hope that this volume will inform civilian and military faculty, students and defence practitioners as well as members of the broader community interested in these issues, and will contribute to the scholarship on mainstreaming gender perspectives in military education programs.

*Dr. Grazia Scoppio is a Professor in the Department of Defence Studies, Royal Military College of Canada (RMC), is cross-appointed in the Department of Political Studies at Queen's University and is a Fellow at the Centre for International and Defence Policy at Queen's. She held several appointments including Acting Deputy Director Research, Dallaire Centre of Excellence for Peace and Security; Fulbright Canada Research Chair in Peace and War Studies at Norwich University, Vermont, USA; and Dean of Continuing Studies at RMC. She is a member of the Editorial Boards of the Canadian Military Journal and the Comparative and International Education journal (CIE) and was the Editor (French) with Dr. Marianne Larsen, Editor (English) of the CIE journal. Her multidisciplinary research focuses on military personnel issues including: recruiting a diverse force; diversity and gender in military organizations; immigrants in the armed forces; and military education. She authored or co-authored several publications, including the book The Power of Diversity in the Armed Forces – International Perspectives on Immigrant Participation in the Military, co-edited by Scoppio and Greco.*

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# "Teaching Gender" at the Royal Military College of Canada

## Sarah A. Hill, PhD

This essay shares observations about the initial delivery of a course entitled "Psychology of gender in the military" at the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC). This course uses an experiential learning[1] approach that is well-suited to a topic with deep, personal meaning (gender) presented in a course that invites students to situate their personal experience in the context of psychological research into gender and the professional context of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF).

At the RMC, an undergraduate course on gender was discussed for some time before a formal proposal emerged from the Military Psychology and Leadership (MPL) department in 2018. The psychology department was a logical "home" for this course because of the rich literature in the domain of gender research that exists within the discipline of psychology. Other disciplines also grapple with gender, of course, but MPL is uniquely positioned at RMC to begin to address the focused study of gender as an area of inquiry with its own extensive literature. From the perspective of RMC, this course is consistent with broad organizational efforts at culture change, both at the College and within the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). It contributes to the CAF a (growing) cohort of young officers with some experience thinking criti-cally about questions involving gender.

The course "Psychology of gender in the military" is currently offered as a senior undergraduate seminar course. It is an elective, and requires only introductory psychology, a required course for all cadets at RMC, as a pre-requisite. Thus, the students are primarily Naval and Officer Cadets (N/OCdts) between the ages of 19 and 21 years who are typically in their final year of studies at the College. Most students to date have been psychology majors. The course has been offered twice; it is expected to evolve further in future.

The main topics addressed in the course range from basic definitions through consideration of gender roles and their implications in multiple contexts (e.g., work/professional contexts, relationship/family contexts), including consideration for how specific behaviour sets (e.g., leadership) interact with sex, gender, and social roles. The text by Helgeson[2] is an excellent source for students who are grappling with the academic literature on gender for the first time – the topics and inclusive, intersectional approach taken (i.e., looking at gender as it interacts with other variables such as socio-economic status or ethnicity/cultural variables) provide a deep introduction to the research literature on gender. Supplemental readings

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1    Alice Y. Kolb and David A. Kolb, "Learning Styles and Learning Spaces: Enhancing Experiential Learning in Higher Education", in *Academy of Management Learning & Education* 4, no.2, 2005: 193-212.
2    Vicki Helgeson, *Psychology of Gender* (6th edition), (New York, Routledge, 2020).

also are made available during the course, often from good quality popular sources, strategic CAF guidance[3], and the empirical literature as a way of bridging the gap between academic research and the lived experiences of students. Research that has been carried out within the CAF[4] is of particular interest to students in this course.

The general goal of the course is to improve student comprehension of how gender is framed in the psychological literature, promote consideration of personal experiences in the context of the academic literature, explore multiple statistical and explanatory models used in the empirical literature, and to consider the benefits and challenges of studying gender. As the course title suggests, the course also serves as a forum in which to tease out the similarities and differences in how gender is experienced and influences military professionals and those who live/work in other contexts. Students in the course are given ample opportunity to apply their expanding knowledge to aspects of student lived experience, and the lived experience of other military members, to critically evaluate how gender interacts with policy, practice, and human behaviour generally.

## How the course is currently run

In its current form, the course runs as an elective senior seminar course made up of gender-diverse (but predominantly cis-gender) N/O Cdts. The course format (seminar) requires students to complete one or more reading assignments each week and participate in class discussions. If in-person classes are disrupted, as when all classes moved online for a time during COVID-19, in-depth discussions are replaced with responses to assigned discussion/thought questions, which include personal reflections on the readings plus critical reaction to the issues and questions raised in the assigned reading. Students are encouraged to respond to one another's responses to maintain the "discussion" aspect. The course follows a 12-week term, and there are approximately 2-3 hours of discussion each week, augmented as necessary by instructor explanations and expansions on the assigned reading material. The main deliverable for this course has been a 7500-10000 word (15-20 pages) term paper[5].

## Student experience

In general, feedback from end-of-course reviews and from spontaneous, informal discussions about the course has been primarily positive. Students have enjoyed the opportunity for extensive discussions, and have generally found the course content both engaging and relevant to their experiences. At the same time, some students struggle when their personal experiences and explanations do not align with empirical evidence in the textbook. The general trend of prioritizing personal experience over empirical evidence[6] that seems so widespread online manifests in similar ways in this course: Students push back sometimes when their own experience deviates from

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3       For example, Department of National Defence "*The path to dignity and respect: the Canadian Armed Forces sexual misconduct response strategy",* (2020), https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/the-path-to-dignity-and-respect.html

4       For example, Alan Okros and Denise Scott, "Gender Identity in the Canadian Forces: A Review of Possible Impacts on Operational Effectiveness", in *Armed Forces and Society*, 41 no. 2, 2015, 243-256.

5       This has been negotiated with each class, and replaces the final examination . The topic of the term paper required preapproval by the course instructor and had to fall under the general umbrella topic of "gender integration in the CAF".

6       Matt Grawlich, "Science vs. lived experience: A false dichotomy", *Psychology Today,* last modified Jan 2, 2021, https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/hovercraft-full-eels/202101/science-vs-lived-experience-false-dichotomy.

what the evidence suggests. For example, a young lesbian parent enrolled in the course took exception to research reporting that adopted male children of lesbian parents engage in fewer stereotypically masculine play behaviours[7], contrary to her observations of her own child. This provided an ideal opportunity to critically examine the research and reconcile it with the student's experience. In contrast, some students are still developing their gender identity and find the empirical evidence reassuring and helpful. One of the most consistent pieces of informal feedback received is the overwhelming sense that students appreciate the opportunity to discuss sensitive topics in a safe space, particularly for students who do not "fit" the gender binary, or are less certain about their gender identity. The opportunity to question and explore ideas related to gender is embraced, at least by the students who choose to take this course.

Formal evaluations of the course have supported these informal messages, but there have been too few respondents to end-of-course evaluations at this point to probe that evidence more deeply.

## Instructor Reflections

After only two iterations of the course, it is difficult to make definitive statements about what has gone well or poorly in the course to date. Some general thoughts, however, are offered here based on the experience of teaching two different groups in two different delivery circumstances.

## What went well?

By far the most consistent observation I have made is that the course provides an opportunity for deep discussions and gives students a chance to work through experiences that puzzle them or that have felt unfair. Given the developmental stage of the students (leaving adolescence and beginning the young adult phase of their lives) and their status as aspiring officers in the CAF, the course is particularly well timed. The course content seems to align quite well with issues they are wrestling with in their lives.

Students also seem to appreciate the opportunity to link changes happening in their personal and professional/organizational contexts (e.g., new roles as individuals mature; cultural evolution; equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) initiatives; gender integration; employment equity) with the empirical evidence. The frustration of these young people with the slow pace of meaningful change is tempered somewhat as their awareness of the complexity and difficulty of understanding and articulating ideas about gender grows. For many of the students who have taken it thus far, the course also provides an opportunity to debunk some myths (e.g., men are "natural" leaders, women gossip more than men) and discuss personal and observed experience in a focused and still relatively private way.[8]

## What could have gone better?

This course, like every course, will benefit from additional refinements in terms of both content and delivery. Perhaps most importantly, the pedagogical choice to approach this in a seminar format is very demanding for some students. The requirement to prepare in advance of class and come ready to

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7       Abbie E. Goldberg, Deborah A. Kashy, and JuliAnna Z. Smith, "Gender-Typed Play Behavior in Early Childhood: Adopted Children with Lesbian, Gay, and Heterosexual Parents", *Sex Roles*, 67, no. 9–10 (2012): 503–515, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-012-0198-3

8       It is sometimes surprising to discover how big the gaps are for some students in terms of their knowledge of basic biology and sexual behaviours, in addition to their incomplete general knowledge about other aspects of life (e.g., power dynamics in organizations, politics, relationships). Instructors need to be prepared to address these gaps if/when they manifest.

discuss issues in a critical fashion requires a degree of self-discipline and maturity that even some senior undergraduates find challenging. Combined with limited life experience - mitigated to some degree by the opportunity for group discussions, which broadens the sample of experiences - preparation and readiness for this course are not uniform across all students who enroll. Although this is certainly an important issue, the value of the seminar format and the fact that most students rise to the challenge means that I am unlikely to rethink this aspect of the course, at least in the near future. I may, however, build more "mini-lectures" into the course to provide more obvious and concrete opportunities to apply the models and frameworks from the literature to student experiences. Multiple short 5-10 minute explanations can be interspersed with a more free-flowing conversation without a great deal of difficulty, and may provide a mechanism for helping less advanced students to get more from the course.

It is difficult to compare online and in-person delivery of this course on the basis of only a single trial of each method[9], but it was my observation that conversations were easier and more nuanced when conducted face-to-face. Students also had less ability to avoid issues that made them feel uncomfortable (e.g., not all students are comfortable discussing systemic bias, or gendered norms for sexual behaviour). The safety of the in-person context also facilitated open discussion better than the online context. Feelings of safety developed from the ability to close the door for some conversations, and by establishing group norms for attribution and the sharing of class content that generally covered confidentiality and non-attribution outside the class. Both student discomfort with online learning and the instructor's discomfort with teaching online may also have contributed to this perceived difference, however.

## Conclusion and looking forward

The initial forays into teaching gender to undergraduates at a military college that I have described in this essay represent relatively tentative first steps in bringing this kind of content to the forefront of education in the Canadian military colleges. The openness of the students to exploring gender in the military context is heartening and consistent with organizational initiatives aiming to change the culture of the CAF[10]. The relatively low enrollments[11], however, suggest there is a great deal more work to do. The topic of gender is not uniquely psychological in terms of how it can be incorporated into many facets of undergraduate education, and it is heartening to see other courses in development in other disciplines (e.g., political science, English literature) that will ultimately complement what I have developed in psychology at RMC. Further course development needs to take into consideration the preparation and maturity of students to ensure that the course content remains accessible and interpretable to young adults, and instructors need to remain alert to areas where some remedial background information needs to be incorporated to help overcome myths and misunderstandings that some students may bring to class with them. Graduates of this course are well-positioned to grapple with questions of gender that will arise in their careers as military officers in the CAF.

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9      The course was delivered online in 2021 due to restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

10      Such as Department of National Defence "The path to dignity and respect: the Canadian Armed Forces sexual misconduct response strategy", (2020), https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/the-path-to-dignity-and-respect.html

11      Twenty students have completed the course to date.

*Dr. Sarah Hill is an associate professor in the Military Psychology and Leadership department at the Royal Military College of Canada, and currently chairs the interdisciplinary War Studies programme. She holds a doctoral degree in Social Psychology and a Master's degree in Personality and Psychometrics from Queen's University. She served for many years as the Program Chair of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, Canada conference (IUS Canada). Her interest in gender, and equity issues more broadly, has informed her teaching and professional duties for more than two decades.*

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# Teaching Gender to Soldiers:

## Experiences from a Canadian Educator

## Grazia Scoppio, PhD

As an academic who has been working for over 21 years in defence, at the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC)[1] and the Canadian Forces College (CFC)[2] I am in a strong position to both teach to military members and conduct research about military personnel on issues related to equity, diversity and inclusion, recruitment, immigrants in the armed forces, and military education. In this article, I share my experience developing and teaching the course "Gender Perspectives in Defence and Security Contexts," an elective in the Joint Command and Staff Programme (JCSP)[3] and Master of Defence Studies (MDS).[4]

JCSP students are senior officers from all three branches of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), at the Major or Lieutenant Colonel ranks, and Navy equivalent, as well as some international officers from allied countries. The program is delivered both in person at CFC and via distance learning. Residential JCSP students who meet the requirements, complete concurrently the MDS with two possible pathways, course-based or research-based. JCSP includes seven mandatory core courses, as well as elective options for MDS students in the course-based pathway. Students choose electives based on their interest, as such the size of each class and the students' demographics vary in each elective. In terms of demographics for the whole JCSP residential program, there are usually over a hundred students per year, of which about 20% are women. Therefore, the representation rate of women in JCSP is higher than the representation rate of women in the CAF, currently around 16%.[5]

The impetuses for the elective course on gender were concurrently my research around gender issues in the Canadian military,[6] the continued prevalence of sexual assault and harassment in the CAF[7] and momentum at the institutional level. Indeed, in Nov 2020, the CFC Director of Academics and the Director of Programmes sent a request to faculty members to identify any complementary studies electives they wished to run during the next JCSP serial. I submitted a course on gender perspectives in defence and security context, which was approved for delivery

1       Royal Military College of Canada, "What is RMC?" Government of Canada, National Defence (2023). https://www.rmc-cmr.ca/en/college-commandants-office/what-rmc

2       Canadian Forces College, "Mission and Vision of the Canadian Forces College," Government of Canada, National Defence (2023). https://www.cfc.forces.gc.ca/263-eng.html

3       Canadian Forces College, "Joint Command and Staff Programme," Government of Canada, National Defence (2023). https://www.cfc.forces.gc.ca/226-eng.html

4       Royal Military College of Canada, "Master of Defence Studies," Government of Canada, National Defence (2023). https://www.rmc-cmr.ca/en/registrars-office/master-defence-studies#gi-rg

5       Canadian Armed Forces, "Statistics of women in the Canadian Armed Forces." Government of Canada, National Defence (2023) https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/women-in-the-forces/statistics.html

starting academic year 2021-22.

The lens I adopted in developing the course was multidisciplinary and grounded in gender studies, political studies and defence studies. As a starting point, I drew from my report stemming from the consultations on gender representation and diversity directed by the Heyder-Beattie Class Actions initiated by former members of the CAF against the Government of Canada, surrounding issues regarding sexual misconduct in connection with their military service.[8] My report, included in a summary report not yet implemented, argued that to support culture change, the CAF needs to develop and deliver a mandatory career-long educational program on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accountability (IDEA).[9] Although the recommended IDEA program would go beyond gender, have a CAF-wide scope and elements of accountability built in, which would not be possible in the case of an optional course, it provided a springboard to identify gender-related topics for the new elective.

My teaching philosophy is informed by adult education principles where students have ownership of their learning, by actively seeking the knowledge they need and also creating new knowledge, individually or in collaboration with peers. My role as instructor is to facilitate the learning by adapting my teaching approach to the diverse needs and backgrounds of my students, as well as using multimedia content and active learning strategies.

This is a seminar-based course entailing student participation and engagement through student-led presentations and seminar discussions, concluding with a written exam. The course is delivered in person at CFC with a couple of remote sessions, including one with a guest speaker. For the content, I selected foundational theories, empirical perspectives and practical examples to understand and critically analyze the role of gender in society, defence, and international security. Course materials are interdisciplinary, representing a wide spectrum of perspectives from international authors of different genders, and are updated yearly to present new research. For example, a chapter of Stéfanie von Hlatky's new book *Deploying Feminism: The Role of Gender in NATO Military Operations*,[10] was included in the course readings in fall 2023.

The course topics can be grouped in three clusters (See also summary of course outline at Annex A):

1. Theories and frameworks related to gender, intersectionality, hegemonic masculinity, military culture and the warrior identity.

2. Sexual misconduct in military and defence

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6        See Grazia Scoppio, Nancy Otis, Yan Yan, & Sawyer Hogenkamp, "Experiences of Officer Cadets in Canadian Military Colleges and Civilian Universities: A Gender Perspective," *Armed Forces & Society* (2020) https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X20905121

7        See Marie Deschamps, *External Review into Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces* (2015). https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/dnd-mdn/migration/assets/FORCES_Internet/docs/en/caf-community-support-services-harassment/era-final-report-april-20-2015-eng.pdf; Sarah Turnbull, "2021: A year of investigations into alleged military sexual misconduct," CTV News (2021) https://www.ctvnews.ca/interactive/2021-a-year-of-investigations-into-alleged-military-sexual-misconduct-1.5671959

8        See CAF DND "Sexual Misconduct Class Action Settlement," n.d. https://www.caf-dndsexualmisconductclassaction.ca/en/faq#:~:text=In%202016%20and%202017%20Seven,sex%2C%20gender%2C%20gender%20identity%20or

9        Maya Eichler, Grazia Scoppio, Meaghan Shoemaker, Nadine Schultz-Nielsen, Christine Wood, Nancy Taber, Andre Jean, Chrystal Harris, Lisa Vandehei, & Matthew Coates, *Gender Representation and Diversity Consultation Group: Summary Report,* Government of Canada, National Defence (2021). https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/conduct-and-culture/conduct-and-culture-research-and-policies.htm

10        Stéfanie von Hlatky's, *Deploying Feminism: The Role of Gender in NATO Military Operations*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2022).

organizations, Military Sexual Trauma, discrimination against LGBTQ2+[11] members in the military, and gender-based violence in theatres of operations.

3. Incorporating gender perspectives in peace-keeping and security operations, the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), gender mainstreaming and Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) in the CAF, a process implemented by the Government of Canada to analyze and understand the impact of policies, initiatives and programs on intersectional groups of women, men and gender diverse people.[12]

I delivered the course in the past three academic years and it is well attended by CAF and international officers of both genders from various ethnic and racial backgrounds, for a total of 37 students over the three years, including two auditing students. The official course evaluations have been positive overall (See Annex B). Additionally, given the standardized nature of official course evaluations offering little room for open-ended comments, in the last two years I sought further feedback from students via email on a voluntary basis to gather more comprehensive input to enhance the course. Seven students sent valuable positive feedback via email after completing the course. Acknowledging that email is not anonymous, using a survey platform in the future would address this limitation. The main themes emerging from the open comments in students' official evaluations and voluntary email feedback are summarized below.

## Including gender course in core curriculum

A recurring comment received is that the course, or parts of it, should be included in the core curriculum of JCSP rather than being an elective as illustrated by these comments:

*"A version of this course should be included in the core curriculum of JCSP. We learned a lot of lessons that are important for the larger group to understand if we want to change the military culture."* (Anonymous - Official course evaluation)

*"I believe this course should be a mandatory portion of JCSP as it is incredibly relevant to the current climate of the CAF and is critical in the decision-making process."* (CAF officer, male)

Additionally, it was suggested that a specific version of the course should be delivered to junior officers and portions of the course should be included within leadership courses for Non-Commissioned Members (NCMs).

## Diversity and inclusion

Diversity and inclusion was also a recurring theme as exemplified by these quotes:

*"The most valuable thing I learned in the course was how to effectively navigate and communicate in a diverse and inclusive environment, which is increasingly essential in today's military landscape."* (International officer, female)

*"The most valuable thing I learned on this course was the actual and factual progression of understanding genesis of what is going on in contemporary society and how it manifests in the CAF. Spe-

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11        Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Two-Spirit or another non-binary gender or minority sexual identity.

12        Women and Gender Equality Canada, "Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus)," Government of Canada, Date modified: 2022-10-13, https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-analysis-plus.html

*cifically, how the generic view and understanding of 'diversity' and 'inclusion' is not actually understood in our organization."* (CAF officer, male)

*"I think studying gender studies in the military can be both challenging and rewarding. While there may be resistance and hurdles to overcome, there are also numerous opportunities for positive change, personal growth, and professional development. Promoting a more inclusive and equitable military is an ongoing process that benefits both individuals and the organization as a whole. I believe that courses like this are vital for the modern military."* (International officer, female)

## Better prepared for leadership

Some students felt better prepared for command and leadership roles, after taking the course:

*"The concepts and research we studied in this class will make me better prepared to command and lead within DND [Department of National Defence] and the CAF. I feel better prepared to lead positive Culture Change within the CAF over the coming years."* (Anonymous – Official course evaluation)

*"Having access to reference material and a better foundation empowers me to have more informed discussions with subordinates, peers, and superiors."* (CAF officer, male)

*"The course was instrumental in preparing me for future responsibilities in my career. One notable example is how it equipped me with the knowledge and tools to lead diverse teams successfully, a skill set that will be indispensable as I advance in my military career."* (International officer, female)

## Sharing experiences

Students valued the group discussions and the ability to share experiences during the course. For example, a male CAF officer felt that hearing other people's experiences, particularly those of officers from other countries, was very valuable as they often had different perspectives on these topics and sometimes "challenged how we see things as Canadians." Another student suggested that less time should be spent summarizing the readings during the student-led seminars and more time discussing them, as he believes that "deep learning happens through sharing and interacting" (CAF officer, male). At the same time, a few students experienced frustration and challenges:

*"I think great discussions were had but I still had some frustration with some students who did not seem to get it."* (CAF officer, female)

*"As a female in the military, you are always 'the expert in the room' – without actually being it. I feel that I can contribute more confident in discussions like that now, and especially in the military context there are unique challenges."* (International officer, female)

## Gender-based Analysis Plus

GBA Plus was also mentioned as an approach that is valuable but not necessarily well understood or widely implemented as reflected in these comments.

*"The focus is very much on GBA+ approach which appears to have been taken on well with CAF, but not other countries – I am on deployment with the USA and NATO colleagues and none of the GBA+ approach is discussed, included in planning etc."* (International officer, female)

*"I am currently employed in the area of capability development and have little direct contact with that topic [gender]. The only interesting thing is that GBA+ has been added to all projects, but so far no one has been able to answer the question of what exactly this looks like for the respective projects."* (International officer, female)

## What works

In terms of what works well in the course, students appreciated the course structure, the syndicate format, the balanced work load, the equilibrium between theory and practical application, the real-world scenarios and case studies to reinforce the concepts learned, and the inclusion of a woman general officer as a guest speaker.

## Additional suggestions

Regarding additional learning strategies to implement in the future, students put forth several suggestions, including: group assignments requiring students to collaborate on a research project related to gender issues; reflective essays or journals prompting students to connect course material to personal experiences; inviting more subject matter experts to deliver guest lectures to keep the course relevant and provide useful examples; more group activities with sufficient preparation time; additional awareness questionnaires such as the one on myths about the concept of race; supplementary instructor-led lectures to delve deeper into some topics such as WPS; and a debate activity using real stigmas existing it today's society.

Overall, the students' feedback was important to reinforce the relevance and applicability of the course to prepare senior officers for future operational and institutional leadership roles. The students' recommendations to include the course in the mandatory core curriculum should be considered by the leadership to expose all JCSP students to these topics, and

not just a selected few. Further, it was suggested to deliver a version of the course to junior officers and include parts of it within leadership courses for NCMs. The comments made to enhance the course were also very valuable. For example, I built-in more instructor lectures on complex topics such as UNSCR 1325, and incorporated additional active learning activities to better bridge theory and practice. At the same time, some students underscored the ongoing challenges both at the institutional level and in international contexts. Indeed, it will take time to truly integrate gender perspectives and GBA Plus at all levels of the organization and in all defence and security contexts, but it is promising to see that the CAF, the US and many allies are making progress in including gender and related topics within military education programs, and this provides a good starting point to shape more inclusive leaders.

*Dr. Grazia Scoppio is a Professor in the Department of Defence Studies, Royal Military College of Canada (RMC), is cross-appointed in the Department of Political Studies at Queen's University and is a Fellow at the Centre for International and Defence Policy at Queen's. She held several appointments including Acting Deputy Director Research, Dallaire Centre of Excellence for Peace and Security; Fulbright Canada Research Chair in Peace and War Studies at Norwich University, Vermont, USA; and Dean of Continuing Studies at RMC. She is a member of the Editorial Boards of the Canadian Military Journal and the Comparative and International Education journal (CIE) and was the Editor (French) with Dr. Marianne Larsen, Editor (English) of the CIE journal. Her multidisciplinary research focuses on military personnel issues including: recruiting a diverse force; diversity and gender in military organizations; immigrants in the armed forces; and military education. She authored or co-authored several publications, including the book The Power of Diversity in the Armed Forces – International Perspectives on Immigrant Participation in the Military, co-edited by Scoppio and Greco.*

# Annex A – Summary of course outline

**DS 585: GENDER PERSPECTIVES IN DEFENCE AND SECURITY CONTEXTS**

**Course Description**

This interdisciplinary course examines gender perspectives within defence, military and international security contexts.  The course will provide both theoretical and analytical frameworks related to gender, stereotypes, masculinity and femininity, and intersectionality, as well as practical applications of gendered perspectives in operations and case studies. The topics covered include gender mainstreaming in the military realm, incorporating a gendered perspective in NATO operations, gender-based violence, and women, peace and security (WPS). Assessment includes participation in discussions, presentations and written essays.

**Assessment**

This seminar-based course entails student participation and engagement throughout. Students are assessed on participation in discussions, student-led seminar presentations, and a final examination written assignment.

**Course Schedule**

**Session 1** - Course Introduction.
**Session 2** - Theoretical and analytical frameworks related to gender, stereotypes, masculinity and femininity, social constructions of gender roles, gender stereotypes, and gender equity.
**Session 3** - Intersectionality theories, including intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, generational, culture and other diversity identities.
**Session 4** - Military culture, the warrior framework, and hegemonic masculinity.
**Session 5** - Sexual misconduct and sexual assault in military and defence organizations, Military Sexual Trauma (MST).
**Session 6** - LGBTQ2+ members in the military, homophobia and discrimination against LGBTQ2+ members.
**Session 7** - Gender-based violence in theatres of operations.
**Session 8** - Gender, peacekeeping operations, and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security (WPS).
**Session 9** - Gender and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).
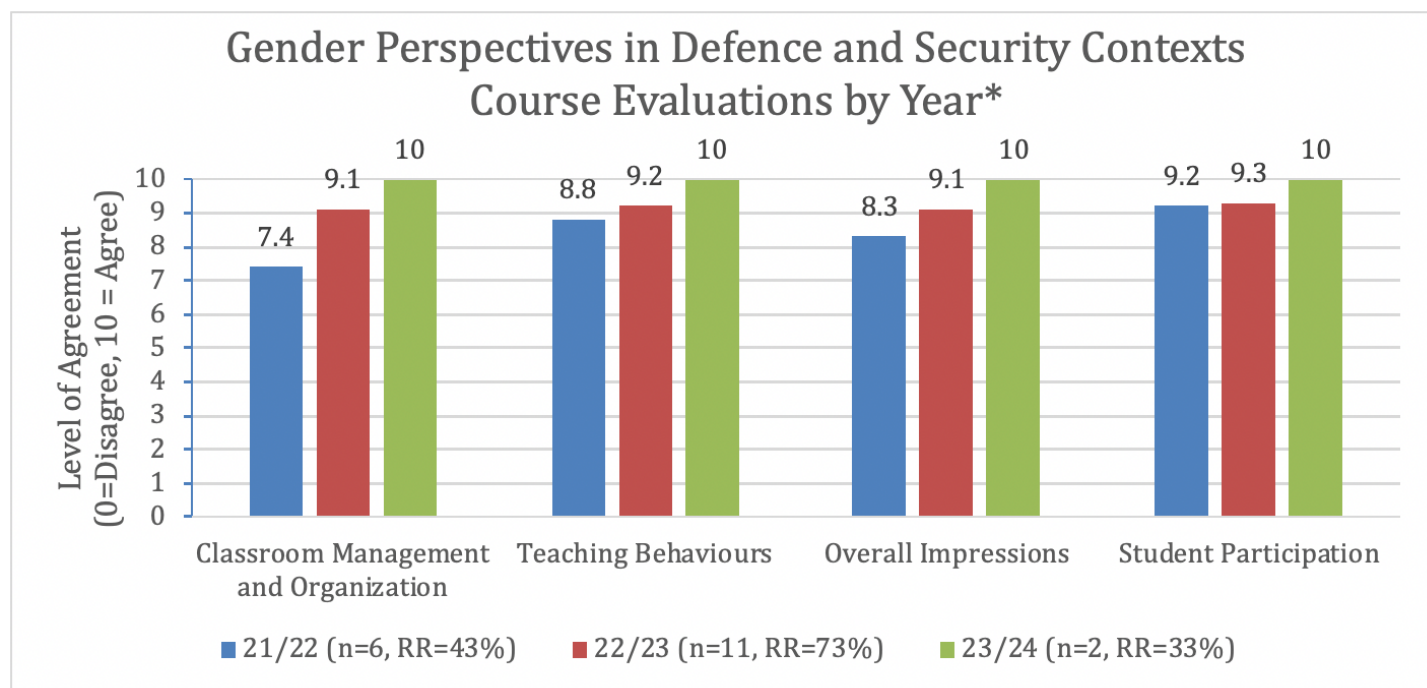**Session 10** - Focus on Canada - Applying GBA Plus and gender mainstreaming in the Canadian government, the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces: opportunities and challenges.
**Session 11** - Case studies, lessons and best practices on incorporating gender perspectives in defence and security contexts.
**Session 12** - Course Summary.

# Annex B – Official course evaluations summary results



**Gender Perspectives in Defence and Security Contexts Course Evaluations by Year***

Legend:
- 21/22 (n=6, RR=43%)
- 22/23 (n=11, RR=73%)
- 23/24 (n=2, RR=33%)

| Category | 21/22 | 22/23 | 23/24 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Classroom Management and Organization | 7.4 | 9.1 | 10 |
| Teaching Behaviours | 8.8 | 9.2 | 10 |
| Overall Impressions | 8.3 | 9.1 | 10 |
| Student Participation | 9.2 | 9.3 | 10 |

Y-axis: Level of Agreement (0=Disagree, 10 = Agree)

* Students ranked their level of agreement from 0 (disagree) to 10 (agree). Total 35 students with 19 total responses = average response rate 54% over 3 years

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# Communicating in a Complex World:

## Incorporating Gender Perspectives into Professional Military Education

## Sonya Finley, PhD

American professional military education (PME) is designed to develop leaders. Successful leaders are effective communicators who purposefully engage with audiences to inform, understand, and influence attitudes and behaviors in support of goals. Beginning with a brief overview of policy guiding American PME, I introduce key concepts guiding "Competitive Communication Strategies," a graduate-level elective course I have taught for over a decade at National Defense University (NDU) in Washington D.C. I employ a "receiver-centric, rather than sender-centric"[1] communication framework that emphasizes analyzing audience identities and perspectives. This provides an organic opportunity to incorporate the global Women, Peace and Security (WPS) principle of gender perspectives[2] into communication strategy development. Over twenty years into the WPS-agenda, many "JPME [joint] faculty members are reluctant to integrate gender considerations into curriculum, as most are largely unfamiliar with the subject themselves."[3] Whether PME institutions approach communications as personal leadership competencies[4] or as components of operational planning and strategy development,[5] communication-related curricula provide logical opportunities for introducing and incorporating gender perspectives, albeit from an instrumental point of view. Communication based in audience analysis empowers leaders to more effectively ideate communication activities that may resonate with intended audiences, and even develop more viable goals based in the lived realities of those involved.[6] In today's complex world, leaders engage with a wide diversity of audiences at home and abroad and leaders cannot ignore the fact that most audiences are mix-gender.

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1       Rosa Brooks, "Ten Years On: The Evolution of Strategic Communication and Information Operations since 9/11," Prepared Statement/Testimony before the House Armed Services Sub-Committee on Evolving Threats and Capabilities (July 12, 2011), 3-6. https://scholarship.law.georgetown.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1112&context=cong

2       U.S. Department of Defense, "Women, Peace, and Security Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan," (June 2020), 9. https://media.defense.gov/2020/Jun/11/2002314428/-1/-1/1/WOMEN_PEACE_SECURITY_STRATEGIC_FRAMEWORK_IMPLE-MENTATION_PLAN.PDF

3       Tahina Montoya and Joan Johnson-Freese, "From Exception to Norm: Closing the Women, Peace, and Security Implementation Gap Through Joint Professional Military Education," Modern War Institute (July 13, 2023). https://mwi.westpoint.edu/from-exception-to-norm-closing-the-women-peace-and-security-implementation-gap-through-joint-professional-military-education/

4       U.S. Army Doctrine Publication 6-22: Army Leadership and the Profession (July 31, 2019), 5-9. https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/ARN20039-ADP_6-22-001-WEB-5.pdf

5       Combined Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) 1800.01F, "Officer Professional Military Education Policy," (U.S. Department of Defense, May 15, 2020), A-4. https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/education/cjcsi_1800_01f.pdf?ver=2020-05-15-102430-580

6       Defense Science Board, "Task Force on Strategic Communication," (January 2008), 11-13. https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a476331.pdf

## Professional Military Education's Increased Emphasis on Effective Communication

The U.S. Officer Joint Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP) establishes goals and policies governing the "progressive educational continuum" of officers from pre-commissioning through general/flag officer.[7] The first "joint knowledge to be mastered over a continuum of learning" is "strategic thinking and communication".[8] At the National War College (NWC), we emphasize critical and creative thinking, and effective communication.

NWC advances students' understanding of war and the ability to develop national security strategies. Grounded in Carl von Clausewitz' trinity of reason, passion, and chance representing the enduring na-

ture of war, students appreciate war's ever-evolving character given "the fact that war and its forms result from ideas, emotions, and conditions prevailing at the time".[9] Because warfare involves an intricate balance between situationally dependent physical and psychological forces, public opinion has become as important to national security as economics, armed forces, and alliances in the 21st century.[10] National security strategies depend upon effective communication which in turn relies upon receiver-centric, gender perspectives to understand public opinion. The value of a gendered perspective lies in a critical examination of the roles and experiences of women and men in societies as starting points toward promoting meaningful participation of all in developing solutions to security challenges.[11]

*Figure 1: ABCDEF Framework, Sonya Finley*



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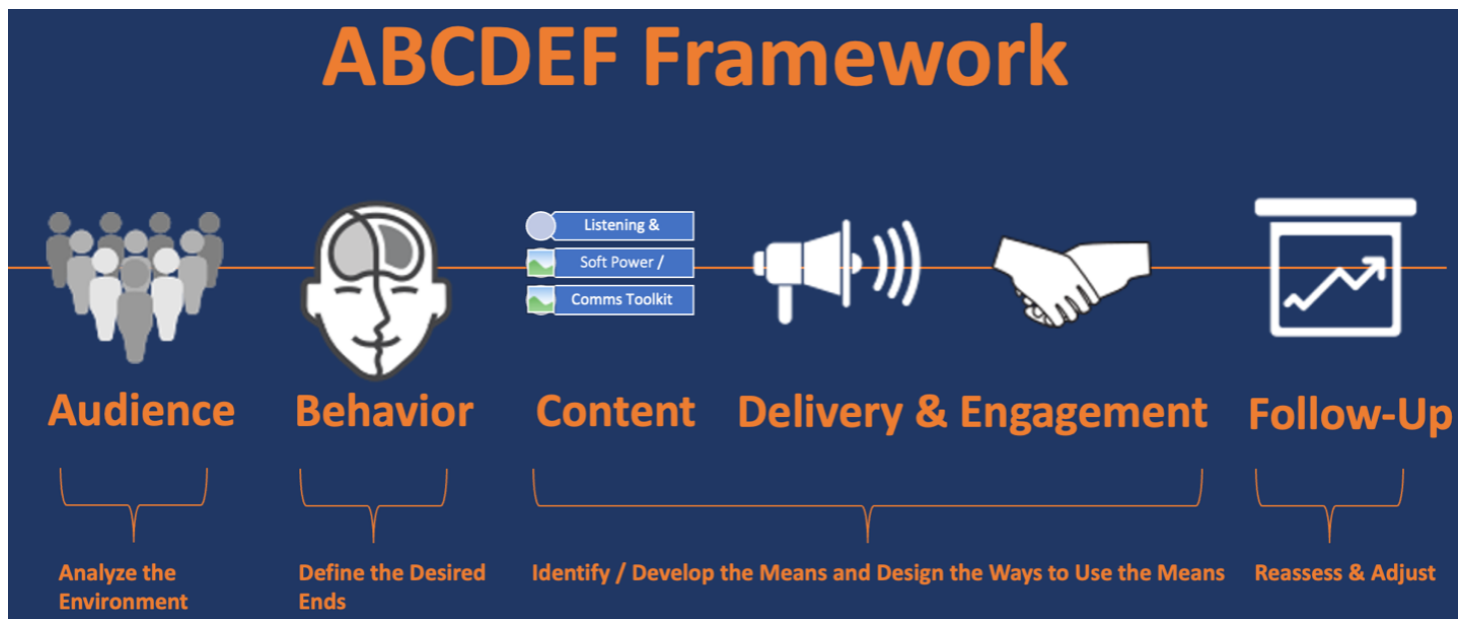
7      CJCSI 1800.01F 2020, A-3.

8      CJCSI 1800.01F 2020, A-A-1.

9      Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 580.

10     Michael Howard, "Grand Strategy in the Twentieth Century," *Defence Studies* Vol 1, No. 1 (Spring 2001): 3.

11     United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, "Gender Mainstreaming: An Overview" (2002): v. This calls for "bringing the perceptions, experience, knowledge and interests of women as well as men to bear on policy-making, planning and decision-making" toward an ultimate goal of gender equality. https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/e65237.pdf

## Receiver-Centric, Gender Perspective-Based Communication Strategies

The students in my elective course are mix-gender U.S. military officers and executive branch civilians averaging 18 years of service who are earning master's degrees from one of four war colleges, sub-components of NDU. My students select overarching goals and develop communication strategies to influence attitudes and behaviors in support of those goals. Over time I refined an ABCDEF framework (Audience-Behavior-Content-Delivery-Engagement-Follow Up) to guide student strategy development.[12] The framework prioritizes identifying audiences relevant to achieving goals and perspective taking[13] as a steppingstone towards specifically incorporating gender perspective analysis.

Students examine the concept of public opinion, specifically forces shaping the "pictures in our heads".[14] Biological forces (e.g. cognitive biases) and environments in which individuals are situated, including social networks, play roles. Social network theory asserts "the key to understanding individuals is understanding the ties between them."[15] It posits that human attitudes, feelings, and behaviors "are influenced by friends within three degrees".[16] Even if we live in "small worlds" within six degrees of separation from one another,[17] our friends' friends' friends play a significant role in shaping how we see ourselves and the world around us.

The concept of weak ties reinforces the logic of diagraming networks beyond three degrees of influence. Weak ties are those individuals who serve as "bridges" providing the "only route along which information

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12      A decade ago, I adopted and modified the unattributed framework after informal discussions with faculty who employed similar frameworks at the U.S. Department of Defense Information School (DINFOS) and U.S. Foreign Service Institute (FSI) within public affairs and public diplomacy training courses. The ABCDEF framework aligns with the end-ways-means construct for strategy development with which National War College students are familiar. With people as the referents, students first analyze audiences before identifying specific, incremental desired behaviors (ends) for each audience that will advance progress toward overarching goals. With a deep understanding of audiences, one can develop content that resonates, and identify delivery and engagement methods that align with audience existing and/or preferred connections and information sources.

13      Allison Abbe, "Understanding the Adversary: Strategic Empathy and Perspective Taking in National Security," *Parameters* Vol 53, Issue 2 (Summer 2023): 19-39. Abbe emphasizes perspective taking with regards to adversaries while I emphasize the skill in terms of understanding any relevant audience.

14      Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Wilder, 2010/1922), 1. For contemporary analysis, see Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013); and, specifically to avoid blind spots and minimize the role of subjectivity in judgment, Atul Gawande, "The Checklist," *The New Yorker* (December 3, 2007).

15      Nicholas A. Christakis and James H. Fowler, *Connected: How Your Friends' Friends' Friends Affect Everything You Feel, Think, and Do* (New York: Little, Brown Spark, 2011), xv. For national security applications of social network theory see: Brian J. Reed and David R. Segal, "Social Network Analysis and Counterinsurgency Operations: The Capture of Saddam Hussein," *Sociological Focus* Vol 39, No 4 (November 2006): 251-264; and Maria Ressa, *From bin Laden to Facebook* (NY: World Scientific Publishing Company Inc. 2013). There is also a host of research into the role of social networks in gender identity and inequality. For an overview of the state of literature see Raina Brands, Gokhan Ertug, Fabio Fonti, and Stafano Tasselli, "Theorizing gender in social network research: What we do and what we can do differently," *Academy of Management Annals* Vol 16, No 2 (2022): 588-620. https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/lkcsb_research/6948/

16      Christakis and Fowler, *Connected,* 28.

17      Jeffrey Travers and Stanley Milgram, "An Experimental Study in the Small World Problem," *Sociometry* Vol. 32 No. 4 (December 1969): 425-443; for an updated experiment in the Internet age, see Peter Sheridan Dodds, Roby Muhamad, Duncan J. Watts, "An Experimental Study of Search in Global Social Networks," *Science* 301 (2003): 827-829. Popularized, the six degrees of separation has been replicated in many studies.

and influence can flow" between disparate, close-knit groups.[18] As Christakis and Fowler explain, "strong ties may bind individuals together into groups, but weak ties bind groups together into the larger society and are crucial for the spread of information".[19] Put simply, it is through *connections* that people share *content* that influences their *cognition* and ultimately behavior.[20] For practitioners studying war and strategy, this is an important reminder that national security is an inherently human endeavor involving individuals shaped by societal networks and environments.[21]

In seminar I incorporate multiple pedagogical ap-

proaches, including self-reflection, case studies, and seminar workshops in which students individually and collaboratively apply course concepts.[23] Students first diagram their own social networks, identifying strong and weak ties, different content shared along ties, and environmental factors that may affect network members' daily lives and perceptions. Having visualized their personal networks, students collaborate to apply social network theory and perspective taking to their final strategy projects.[24]

Starting with a goal and core audience, students diagram possible three-degrees of connections and weak ties, informed by a new-found appreciation that "di-

*Figure 2:* A 3Cs Framework[22]



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18      Mark Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," *American Journal of Sociology* Vol 78, No 6 (May 1973): 1364.

19      Christakis and Fowler, *Connected*, 157.

20      Sonya Finley, "A 3Cs Framework for Conceptualizing the Competitive Information Environment," in *Teaching Public Diplomacy and the Information Instruments of Power in a Complex Media Environment: Maintaining a Competitive Edge* eds. Vivian Walker and Sonya Finley, (U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, August 2020), 6-9. https://www.state.gov/teaching-public-diplomacy-and-the-information-instruments-of-power-in-a-complex-information-environment-2020/ U.S. Military Doctrine categorizes these dimensions as physical, informational, and cognitive. See Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment (May 21, 2014), I-3.

21      David Betz, "War, 'Moral Forces', and the 'Virus of Strategism,'" *Infinity Journal*, "The Strategy Bridge" Special Edition (March 2014): 17-21. https://www.militarystrategymagazine.com/article/war-moral-forces-and-the-virus-of-strategism/

22      Finley 2020, 6.

rectly and indirectly connected people … are being influenced by one another".[25] Identifying professional and personal community-based connections prompts students to incorporate multiple genders and possibly non-centralized groups.[26] Students then conceptualize receiver-centric ways to "listen" to these connected audiences. This process presents an opportunity to incorporate gender perspectives given that the analysis seeks to understand each audience's existing concerns, attitudes, norms of behavior and lived experiences within their environments.[27]

Over the years, students have analyzed audiences for communication strategies designed to improve military recruiting, mitigate the rise of violent extremism in Afghanistan, advance women's leadership in Japan, prevent Ebola outbreaks in West Africa, increase female labor force participation in India, promote women's economic opportunities in Mexico and more. While not every student incorporates gender perspectives into their final projects and while those that do often find obtaining audience data challenging, students consistently remark that they appreciate how seeking to understand the differing experiences of women and men (and even children, depending on the goal) provides a more robust foundation for effective communication and policy development.

Integrating gender perspectives serves a practical purpose for communication strategies: one is more likely to be successful in influencing attitudes and behaviors if one takes the time to understand existing perspectives and lived realities. It is multidisciplinary social network theory that opens students' aperture for relevant audiences, providing opportunities to incorporate gender perspectives as starting points toward more sustainable outcomes whatever the overarching goals.

*Dr. Sonya Finley is a professor at the National War College, National Defense University and adjunct professor, Security Studies Program, Georgetown University. Her research and teaching interests include national security strategy, public diplomacy / communications. She served as an Army strategist and speechwriter, retiring as a colonel after 26 years of assignments in the Indo-Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, and the United States. She holds a BA from Emory University, an MPA from Cornell University, a Certificate in Strategic Thinking and Management for Competitive Advantage from The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, and a PhD from Virginia Tech.*

23      Celestino Perez, Jr. "What Military Education Forgets: Strategy is Performance," *War on the Rocks* (September 7, 2018). https://warontherocks.com/2018/09/what-military-education-forgets-strategy-is-performance/  A lesson entitled "constructing ourselves and others" asks students unpack their own assumptions about identity and communication. Communication strategy cases include Faizullah Jan's analysis of the effects created by Deewa Radio in the Pakistan/Afghanistan border region as well as how extremist organizations target female audiences, both of which have WPS themes. See Faizullah Jan, "International Broadcasting as Component of U.S. Public Diplomacy (A Case Study of Voice of America's DEEWA Radio)" *The Dialogue* Vol X, No 2 (June 2015): 152-165.

24      Abbe 2023. Abbe describes perspective taking as an analytic skill required of strategic leaders that reinforces critical and creative thinking, and communication skills. She argues collaboration may work best for adult-learners attempting to develop this skill.

25      Christakis and Fowler, *Connected*, 113.

26      For many national security-related goals, students may initially diagram male-dominated professional networks. This realization prompted me to incorporate the reflective exercise of mapping one's own social networks which highlights to most (not all) students that their own connections include men and women with differing perspectives and concerns than their own. I specifically ask students to include familial and community connections to purposefully include gender perspectives within the learning process.

27      For communication strategies, audience analysis prompts include questions such as: How does this audience self-identify and why? How are they situated within their social networks? Whom do they trust and find authoritative? What are their daily concerns, needs, interests, activities? What are key conditions and trends you should be aware of (environmental, political, social, economic; at the domestic, regional, international levels)? How do they see us? Who are other actors who might affect our ability to achieve our overarching goals?

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# Critical Thinking in Professional Military Education:

How a Gender Perspective Can Foster Reflective and Deliberative Skills

## Mariya Y. Omelicheva, PhD

Critical thinking is a necessary skill for individuals' professional and personal success. Because it encourages informed decision-making, open-mindedness, and respectful dialogue, critical thinking is vital for flourishing democracies. By advancing innovative problem-solving, contextual awareness, and capacity to imagine and explore alternatives, critical thinking can further economic prosperity, technological prowess, and robust defense. For these reasons, critical thinking has become a broadly accepted educational outcome. Professional military education (PME) has embraced critical thinking as a requisite tool for militaries navigating the complexities of contemporary warfare that demands intellectual agility, diversity of perspectives, and creativity in the deployment of military force.[1]

While there is broad consensus on the pivotal role of critical thinking in decision-making and behavior, theorists and educators disagree on the exact definition of the term. At a minimum, critical thinking encompasses a set of skills or abilities to analyze, synthesize, collect, and assess evidence, argue and advocate ideas, and recognize biases, among others. A broader definition of critical thinking emphasizes dispositions, such as open-mindedness and fair-mindedness, contextual awareness, and reflective skepticism of the established views.[2]

I posit that American PME curriculum favors a narrower understanding of critical thinking.[3] It prioritizes a reasoned approach to the so-called "instrumental problems"[4] with the conceptually clear ends and logic for their resolution. For example, students consider multiple instruments of power to develop the most effective ways and means for addressing a country's strategic challenge. This is a complex problem, insofar as the students work with the multiple sources of information to gain deeper understanding of the country's strategic context. They also weigh

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1      Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, DoD Instruction 1322.35, Vol.1, *Military Education: Program Management and Administration* (April 26, 2022), https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/132235_vol1.PDF?ver=1mKICMbRcNsQUXaPf5YUfw%3D%3D.

2       Karen J. Warren, "Critical Thinking and Feminism," *Informal Logic*, 1 (1988): 31.

3       According to Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-0, *Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces*, for example, "Critical thinking examines a problem in depth from multiple points of view. It determines whether adequate justification exists to accept conclusions as true based on a given inference or argument. Critical thinkers apply judgment about what to believe or what to do in response to facts, experience, or arguments." https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/ARN18314-ADP_6-0-000-WEB-3.pdf.

4       James Southworth, "Bridging Critical Thinking and Transformative Learning: The Role of Perspective-Taking," *Theory and Research in Education*, Vol. 20, Issue 1 (March 2022): 44-63.

risks and costs associated with the proposed courses of action. Yet, this kind of assessment falls short of critical thinking in a broader sense because students do not interrogate the core concepts, such as "national interest" and "security." They tend to prioritize some types of evidence over others without questioning the underlying assumptions that lead them to believe in the "objectiveness" of information that they collect. Reflective skepticism, on the other hand, compels one to approach all claims of knowledge with doubt and question one's own assumptions and beliefs. By probing the meaning of the concept of security, for instance, and asking whose security and interests it mostly represents, reflective thinking can reveal disparities between the conventional idea of national security and human security experienced by all people – women, men, young and old - around the world.[5]

This article embraces the broader understanding of critical thinking as contextual, inquisitive, and reflective thinking.[6] It proposes applying a gender perspective in an exercise of reflection as an approach to foster critical thinking in this broadest sense. A gender perspective interrogates, exposes, and problematizes assumptions that we hold about gender defined as "a set of discourses, which can set, change, enforce, and represent meanings" that a society associates with femininities and masculinities.[7] Gender approaches can reveal implicit biases, preferences, interests, and values that shape students' decision-making and problem solving, thus making their outputs more credible and robust.

I begin with a brief overview of the significance of reflection and deliberation as elements of critical thinking and how explicit instruction in gender perspectives coupled with reflective writing can cultivate deliberative and reflective skills. Next, I introduce the exercise in reflective thinking that I use in a gender and security course followed by a sample of evidence that demonstrates the effectiveness of the proposed approach in cultivating deliberative and reflective skills.

## Reflection and Deliberation as Elements of Critical Thinking

For many theorists, critical thinking is both reasonable and reflective[8] in a sense that it involves constant checking of one's beliefs. To put it differently, reflection is a type of metacognitive skill of thinking about thinking. It involves an active consideration of how one's personal experiences and observations shape their thinking and acceptance of alternative viewpoints. Appreciating the role of reflection in eliciting doubt, skepticism, and inquisitiveness in students, many educators have embraced reflective writing as a tool to cultivate reflective skills.

There can be, however, practical challenges of using reflection for uncovering biases or limitations in the established beliefs. Some students are unlikely to perceive deficiencies in their thinking unless they undergo novel transformative experiences.[9] Our cog-

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5       Human security is about the (in)securities of individuals and communities, rather than states. It encompasses both material and physical insecurities and transcends war-based insecurities to include insecurities stemming from unjust and cruel rule (see, for example, Mary Kaldor, 2011. "Human Security," *Society and Economy* 33(3): 445-446).

6       Warren, "Critical Thinking and Feminism," p. 31.

7       Carol E. Gentry and Laura Sjoberg, *Beyond Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Thinking about Women's Violence in Global Politics* (Zed Books, 2015), pp. 4-5.

8       Robert H. Ennis, "Critical Thinking Across the Curriculum: A Vision," *Topoi* Vol. 37, No. 1 (2018): 165-184; Matthew Lipman, *Thinking in Education* (Cambridge University Press, 1991); Richard Paul, *Critical Thinking: What Every Person Needs to Survive in a Rapidly Changing World* (Foundation for Critical Thinking, 1993).

9       Southworth, "Bridging Critical Thinking and Transformative Learning."

nitive biases, including the most powerful "myside bias,"[10] block alternative position-taking and inhibit meaningful reflection.[11] To assist students in assessing alternative viewpoints with fidelity, I introduce them to a gender perspective and use an instructional technique of an alternative perspective-taking to broaden the scope of their reflective skills.[12]

Explicit instruction on gender perspectives is well suited for engaging students in a meaningful self-reflection and fostering their critical thinking skills. As an example of an approach to instructing students on a gender perspective, one can use the first chapter from *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* by Cynthia Enloe that students read. Titled "Gender Makes the World Go Around: Where Are the Women?" the chapter illuminates the principles of a gender perspective, such as open-mindedness and curiosity about mundane and taken-for-granted things, such as the vernacular of strategists, and how language creates and reproduces meanings that are far from being neutral. Another principle introduced in the chapter entails the recognition of ubiquitous power hierarchies, which are often camouflaged in the language of "objectivity" and "rationality." This principle encourages students to ask questions about who wields social, political, and informational power, and how to challenge it. Lastly, the chapter puts women and other marginalized constituents in global and national politics at the center of investigation and asks how they have become marginalized, what the consequences of this exclusion are, and what can be done about it. The students, then,

can practice the application of these principles in other contexts.

As any critical perspective, gender approaches interrogate, expose, and problematize assumptions that we hold. Gender approaches are ways of perceiving and analyzing, which foreground the impact of gender, as a set of meanings and discourses that reproduce differential understanding of roles, responsibilities, and aptitudes that societies ascribe to men and women. Gender perspectives pay close attention to what is omitted and invisible and ask about the sources and consequences of de-prioritization of certain individuals, groups, states, and approaches as less valuable and valid.[13]

## Using Reflective Writing in the Curriculum on Gender and Security

Reflective writing is one of the assignments that I use in a course titled, "Women, Peace, and Security: Gender Perspective in National Security." Offered as a university-wide elective at the National Defense University (NDU) (Washington, D.C.), the course is designed to illuminate ways in which a gender perspective can enhance students' understanding of security, broaden explanations of the complex security issues, and improve on the policy options for making the world a safer place. The course, which satisfies a requirement for the NDU War Studies concentration, begins with an overview of a gender perspective on security[14] and proceeds through a series of topics applying it to different security issues: inter- and intra-state conflicts, terrorism and counterterror-

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10      Myside bias is a type of cognitive bias that involves reliance on an individual's own prior opinions and attitudes in the assessment of evidence and inferences (Keith E. Stanovich, Richard F. West, and Maggie E. Toplak, "Myside Bias, Rational Thinking, and Intelligence," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* Vol. 22, Issue 4 (2013): 259-264)v.

11      Mercier H, Sperber D. *The Enigma of Reason* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).

12      Southworth, "Bridging Critical Thinking and Transformative Learning."

13      Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (University of California Press, 2014).

14      The author's background is in international relations and political science.

ism, peacekeeping and conflict resolution, women in the military and leadership positions, and intersectionality of gender with race.

One of the goals of the course is to engage US military and civilian students[15] in critical self-reflection for identifying implicit biases in their thinking about security issues. Toward this goal, the course asks students to write a reflection on an event of their choice. There are a variety of events – guest lectures, conferences, and symposia – hosted by NDU and its various components. Students are required to attend some of these events and may choose to participate in others voluntarily. Before attending an event about which they will write a reflection, students receive a set of guidelines asking them to apply a gender lens to make connections between knowledge claims, concrete examples from the course readings and discussions, and their own experiences and opinions. Specifically, students are directed to pay attention to perspectives that are highlighted in the event as well as those that are omitted: What issues are raised, and which could have been addressed but were excluded? What language and imagery are used during the event? Who is invited? Who are the speakers? Who is in the audience? How does the audience react to the event? What questions were asked? What questions were omitted? The students conclude by observing how the event has confirmed, debunked, or enhanced their understanding of an issue. They are also advised to derive practical implications informed by the gender analysis for attaining a more equitable presentation of views, a more diverse group of participants, and more varied and divergent outcomes.

## Critical Thinking Through Reflection: Examples and Observations

PME students are typically unfamiliar with reflective assignments, but many excel in reflection when supported with proper guidelines and find this exercise immensely beneficial. Students choose to reflect on diverse events ranging from meetings with senior military leaders to lectures and symposia on various topics (e.g., cyber security and strategy, WMDs, current events), command assessment programs, and even plays portraying revolutions and conflicts. The only requirement is that the event they attend take place during the "Women, Peace, and Security" course timeframe (12-weeks during the Fall semester).

The first thing that many students notice in these events is the homogeneity or diversity of speakers and attendees (regarding gender, race, and age), and the resulting consequences of (under)representation. Students remark on how similarities in experiences and backgrounds engender the uniformity of perspectives, while the presence of diverse voices inspires creativity and spotlights nuance. Minority students discover that they relate better to speakers who look and sound like them. This becomes a valuable experiential lesson about the role of meaningful representation, which extends beyond tokenism (a practice of putting minimal effort to create an appearance of inclusivity without affording everyone decision-making power and voice) in the decision-making processes at all levels. Likewise, including diverse voices is seen as essential when developing lasting solutions to social problems in organizations (e.g., full integration of women in all military occupations), societies (e.g., women's access to top leadership positions, both elected and appointed), and post-conflict settings (e.g., increasing the number of women-negotiators).

Pondering their experiences with applying a gender perspective in the tabletop exercises or war games, students discern biases toward military solutions versus non-military solutions to security crises as

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15    NDU students come from all branches of the US military and interagency.

well as the participants' reluctance to exhaust all diplomatic means. Students, then, contemplate the sources of this bias and the ways to counteract it, ultimately concluding that not every national security challenge must be resolved with military force.

Instructed to listen to university lectures with a gender lens, students find the omission of women in military history – as leaders, front-line combatants, spies, and others – quite infuriating. They also notice structural impediments to professional advancement of women in military careers and point out gendered differences in the public discourse about women's achievements in the inter-agency and military occupations. By engaging with women's diverse experiences in various security contexts, the students think deeply about the concepts of agency and rationality that typically undergird strategic assessment. Steeped in the readings about women's roles in insurgencies and counterinsurgencies and studies demonstrating the contributions of women peacekeepers and mediators to conflict resolution, students reflect on the importance of re-evaluating counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and peace-building strategies through a gender lens.

*Dr. Mariya Y. Omelicheva is a Professor of Strategy at National War College, National Defense University. She holds PhD (2007) in Political Science from Purdue University and JD in International Law (2000) from Moscow National Law Academy. Dr. Omelicheva's research interests include international and Eurasian security, counterterrorism and human rights, democracy promotion in the post-Soviet territory, Russia's foreign and security policy, and crime-terror nexus. She is the author of Counterterrorism Policies in Central Asia (Routledge 2011), Democracy in Central Asia: Competing Perspectives and Alternate Strategies (University Press of Kentucky 2015), and Webs of Corruption: Trafficking-Terrorism Nexus in Central Asia (Columbia University Press, 2019, with Lawrence Markowitz).*

## Conclusion

Reflective writing coupled with a gender perspective presents students with alternative ways of perceiving security issues and problems and affords them an opportunity to be critical of established worldviews, key aspects of critical thinking. The integration of gender perspectives into PME instruction is also consistent with the dynamics and changes concerning gender in the world today. These gender-driven trends and PME modifications challenge the established intellectual standards for reasoning. As such, they can be considered part of the evolving tradition of inquiry and criticism, improving the quality of students' critical thinking in the broadest sense.

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# Managing Resistance to Women, Peace & Security in Professional Military Education

## Lauren Mackenzie, PhD

## Introduction

The goal of this article is to continue to build on the growing body of Women, Peace & Security (WPS) work that has been done to date and to widen the lens through which WPS is viewed in the professional military education (PME) context.[1] In order to do so, examples of resistant reactions to WPS will be discussed using Baxter and Montgomery's relational dialectics theory as a framework.[2] One of the underlying premises of relational dialectics theory is that tensions are a normal part of social life and are needed to foster change. The theory underscores that learning to manage tension and change is necessary for the growth of healthy relationships and furthermore that relationships are often defined by the negotiation of contradictions.[3] The current article extends this idea by offering an exploration of the tensions experienced when Marine Corps University[4] (MCU) students are introduced to WPS so as to better understand the constructive ways in which such tensions are managed as well as to advance the integration of WPS into the MCU curriculum.

The examples provided in the paragraphs to follow are derived from teaching experiences at MCU where the author has served as a faculty member since 2015. The author has been introducing WPS to students and faculty primarily at the Marine Corps War College (MCWAR), Expeditionary Warfighting School (EWS), and School for Advanced Warfighting (SAW) since arriving at MCU. These schoolhouses, located in Quantico, VA, offer 10-month residential educational programs (with SAW and MCWAR awarding master's degrees), for United States (U.S.) military officers, international officers, and civilians employed by various U.S. government agencies. The curriculum for these programs is derived largely from the fields of military history and political science. MCU faculty have worked both to integrate WPS into existing course content and offered WPS as a stand-alone lecture/seminar - with mixed results over the past nine years. For example, at SAW and EWS, the author offers a stand-alone overview of WPS at the beginning of the academic year that also provides students with information about the Reynolds Scholars program, a year-long enrichment opportunity that brings together students from across the university to advance the WPS effort, and the WPS writing award.[5] However,

1    See, for example, Tahina Montoya and Joan Johnson-Freese, "From Exception to Norm: Closing the Women, Peace, and Security Implementation Gap Through Joint Professional Military Education," *Modern War Institute* (July 13, 2023); Mackenzie, Lauren and Dana Perkins. *Women, Peace & Security in Professional Military Education* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2022).

2    Leslie Baxter and Barbara Montgomery. *Relating: Dialogues and dialectics* (New York: Guilford, 1996).

3    Baxter and Montgomery. *Relating.*

4    Located in Quantico, VA, Marine Corps University (www.usmcu.edu) consists of six colleges and schools, nine programs, seven academic support elements, history division, and museum.

at MCWAR, the author does not offer a stand-alone WPS session, but rather integrates WPS-related concepts and scenarios into her critical thinking and cultural metacognition seminars. It should also be noted that although there has been a significant effort over the years to integrate WPS into MCU faculty development offerings, this article will emphasize several strategies used by the author to manage tensions and resistant reactions to WPS by students, such as:

- Acknowledge potential resistance.

- Examine root causes of resistance.

- Frame resistance to WPS as opportunities to learn.[6]

Before providing examples of resistant reactions and how they might be managed, a brief overview of relational dialectics will be provided.

## Relational Dialectics

Since its inception, the U.S. Marine Corps has been characterized as a people business and this is the entry point through which the author often introduces

WPS at MCU: that is, WPS is about fully leveraging the strengths of – not some – but all Marines. This is by no means easy, and communication scholars have sought for decades to offer theories that can help make sense of the complexities of social interaction. Relational dialectics theory does so not by avoiding contradictions, but rather embracing the range of tensions inherent to social life – focusing, for example, on dialectics such as autonomy and connection as well as novelty and predictability.[7]

Given the high-stakes and often dangerous contexts in which they often work, military personnel employ specific re-framing and sense-making tools to work through such tensions.[8]

The core premise of a relational dialectics approach to research is that meaning making is a process that emerges from the struggle of different, often competing, discourses.[9] These discourses are often a manifestation of our "figured worlds." Holland et al. define figured worlds as "the social contexts where we figure out how we're supposed to think and behave."[10] The military worldview can often feel in conflict with WPS principles, when in fact, they can be mutually

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5       The author has described these efforts in more detail in two recent publications: Lauren Mackenzie, Claire Metelits, and Bradford Wineman, "Marine Corps University's Women, Peace, and Security Scholars Program: An Inaugural Year in Review," *Marine Corps Gazette* (March 2023), 79-82; Lauren Mackenzie, Claire Metelits, and Kyleanne Hunter, "Efforts by Defense Civilians to Integrate Women, Peace, and Security Considerations into Professional Military Education," In *Total Defence Forces in the 21st Century* eds. Joakim Berndtsson, Irina Goldenberg, and Stefanie von Hlatky (Kingston, Ontario: MacGill University Press), 151-172.

6       The author is indebted to the work conducted by the *Global Cognition* research team whose writing on culture general competencies has informed her thinking about WPS. See, for example: Louise Rasmussen and Winston Sieck, "Metacognitive Underpinnings of Cross-Cultural Competence Development" In *Advances in Design for Cross-Cultural Activities*, eds. D. Schmorrow & D. Nicholson, (Boca Raton, FL: Taylor & Francis, 2012) 332-341.

7       Baxter and Montgomery. *Relating.*

8       Christina Knopf, "Relational Dialectics in the Civil-Military Relationship: Lessons from Veterans' Transition Narratives," *Political and Military Sociology: An Annual Review* 40 (2012): 171-191.

9       This theory has been applied by military communication scholars such as Sahlstein, Maguire & Timmerman (2009) whose research underscores how military spouses employ dialectical tensions in the way they communicate about wartime deployments as well as research devoted to understanding how veterans make sense of their combat experiences (Knopf, 2012).

10      Dorothy Holland, William Lachicotte, Debra Skinner, and Carole Cain. *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

reinforcing (for example, both perspectives advocate for the value of improving effectiveness and leveraging force multipliers). Baxter has called for more work dedicated to how contradictions are constructed, reflected, and negotiated in language.[11] The current article responds to this call by providing specific excerpts from Marines reactions to learning about what WPS is and how it applies to leadership effectiveness.

## Tensions associated with WPS

The paragraphs to follow are guided by two foundational questions: [a] What kinds of tensions exist in MCU student reactions to WPS? And [b] How might a relational dialectics approach offer a way of managing these reactions so as to advance the integration of WPS into the MCU curriculum?

Some common tensions that the author has experienced when introducing WPS to MCU students and faculty include: reactivity and proactivity, stability and change, disruption and reintegration. These tensions are found in most relationships but are also often pronounced in a faculty-to-faculty and faculty-to-student relationship. When introducing WPS in PME, for example, common tensions found in the form of questions posed by military students have included:

- **Us/them:** in other words, is WPS about helping our servicemembers understand the value that diverse perspectives can bring to military effectiveness or is it about helping our partner and allies adopt this mindset?

- **Here/there:** do we focus internally on recruitment/retention issues or do export WPS when we deploy?

- **Peace/conflict:** is WPS just a post-conflict "peace" agenda that really has nothing to do with the warfighter?

- **Training/education:** is WPS about the preparation for the known or preparation for the unknown? Often, students just want to know what to "do" via a bulleted list of items to check the box on WPS.

These tensions are often manifested in resistant reactions to WPS by students in their comments:

- "WPS is just another rock in the pack"
- "I'm already up to date on my sexual assault awareness training"
- These are "women's issues"
- This is just more "woke, liberal politics" pushed by female civilians
- I'm sick of this "squishy sh*t"

Many of these initial reactions are understandable, as it seems as though the list of required on-line training mandates for servicemembers and government civilians gets longer with each passing year. Other initial reactions reflect misunderstandings about what WPS is - and is not - that need to be addressed right off the bat when introducing WPS to students. For example, WPS is not the same as sexual assault awareness training. Although such training falls in the "Equities and Supporting Principles" pillar of the U.S. DoD WPS Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan, using the two efforts interchangeably is inaccurate and must be corrected.[12]

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11      Leslie Baxter, "Problematizing the problem in communication: A dialogic perspective." *Communication Monographs* 74, no. 1 (2007): 118-124.

12      U.S. Department of Defense *WPS Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan* (June 2020). https://media.defense.gov/2020/Jun/11/2002314428/-1/-1/1/WOMEN_PEACE_SECURITY_STRATEGIC_FRAMEWORK_IMPLEMENTATION_PLAN.PDF

As mentioned in the introduction, after doing this work for close to a decade, the author has adopted several strategies for managing this resistance that has been met with some success, to include: articulating an acknowledgement of potential resistance, attempting to determine several root causes of resistance, and framing resistance to WPS as opportunities to learn. For example, at the beginning of the academic year when the author introduces WPS to students at the various MCU schoolhouses, she typically will start with stories – how she got involved with WPS and an example of ways it has contributed to mission effectiveness.[13] It is also important to acknowledge that it is perfectly fine to have a complex reaction to WPS – as resistant reactions often stem from the notion that WPS is just another "add-on" distraction from the mission. This should be acknowledged as a fair initial reaction at the beginning of a course or presentation, and then time should be spent discussing that WPS will not distract from the mission, rather it will give personnel a more robust toolkit for asking better questions throughout the conflict spectrum.

It should also be acknowledged that WPS is a very broad framework, and it can take some time to fully understand its value. Ultimately, the message that resonates well with Marines is that WPS considerations make us more resourceful.[14] Whenever possible, the author pairs with a U.S. Marine Colonel who can help support the WPS message by offering concrete examples and using the kind of operationalization language that often resonates more than academic language. In years past, for example, the Command and Staff College Director stated, "As a Marine, I'll take any advantage I can get and I have no doubt that WPS will give you an advantage in how you think and operate on the ground."

It is also worth noting that as time goes on, more and more students and faculty are familiar with WPS and may have had experience implementing it in their units. This is quite a far cry from the early days of integrating WPS into U.S. PME curriculum, when very few students/faculty had ever even heard of the WPS acronym – never mind standing up WPS programs all over the globe as several have now done. This reminds us of how important it is to check in with students/faculty to learn about their background and practice perception-checking to ensure that these experiences are integrated into the lecture or seminar.[15] This harkens back to the wisdom of Daniel Kahneman who warns of the dangers of WYSIATI (What You See Is All There Is) when introducing new ideas.[16] There is great value in asking "What am I missing?" so as to reinforce that knowledge is a living thing we are constantly updating and revising. Although it has been somewhat distressing to be the person who introduces WPS each year and is routinely met with mixed reactions, it can be helpful to see the potential stress as both: [1] debilitating - in the sense that it is common for WPS allies to note how exhausting it can be to consistently have to fight for a seat at the curriculum

13      See, for example, the RAND's (2023) *WPS in Action* compilation of vignettes: Women, Peace, and Security in Action: Including Gender Perspectives in Department of Defense Operations, Activities, and Investments | RAND

14      In the U.S. military, the Marines see themselves as servicemembers who routinely have to justify their existence as a branch of service and do more with less. Examples of this mindset can be found in books such as: Victor Krulak, *First to Fight* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1984), as well as in more recent military culture research projects such as: S. Rebecca Zimmerman, et al., *Movement and Maneuver: Culture and the Competition for Influence Among the U.S. Military Services* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2019).

15      Stella Ting-Toomey. *Communicating across Cultures* (New York: Guilford Press, 1999).

16      Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2013).

table, and [2] as enhancing - in that resistant reactions can help us sharpen our descriptions of the value/relevance of WPS and anticipate push-back for future interactions.[17] As such, the resistant reactions have helped strengthen the case for WPS over time while also acknowledging that alternative perspectives are necessary for growth.

## Conclusion

Although it is much easier said than done, relational dialectics theory reminds us of the importance of recognizing the potentially enabling aspects of seeming opposites. As stated by Baxter, the theory's "core theoretical principle is that meaning in the moment is not simply the result of isolated, unitary discourses, but instead is the result of the interplay of competing discourses."[18]  Since its inception, for example, the WPS effort has noted the paradoxical role of men. On the one hand, as approximately 50% of the population, and 82.5% of US military personnel,[19] we need men to advance WPS; and on the other hand, it is most often men who stand in the way - presumably because they have benefited most from the status quo. This article has been an attempt to acknowledge student resistance to several paradoxical elements of WPS in PME and to offer a different way of framing the resistance. When WPS is viewed as a perspective that can help military personnel and those who instruct them [1] improve their ability to conduct causal analyses and [2] avoid blind spots, it is more likely to be considered the force multiplier that it truly is. The more practiced

faculty become in anticipating and managing resistant reactions to WPS, the greater the potential will become for long-term institutionalization of WPS in the broader PME curriculum.

*Dr. Lauren Mackenzie is Marine Corps University's Professor of Military Cross-Cultural Competence. She earned her MA and PhD in communication from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and has taught intercultural and interpersonal communication courses throughout the DoD for the past 15 years. Dr. Mackenzie's research is devoted to the impact of cultural differences on difficult conversations, and she has written a range of articles and book chapters pertaining to end-of-life communication, relationship repair strategies, and, most recently, the role of failure in education. She is the co-editor with Dr. Kerry Fosher of the 2021 book, Rise and Decline of U.S. Military Culture Programs: 2004-20 and the co-editor with LTC Dana Perkins of the 2022 edited volume, Women, Peace & Security in Professional Military Education.*

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17      Tracy Dennis-Tiwary, *Future Tense: Why Anxiety is Good for You (Even Though it Feels Bad)* (New York: Harper Collins, 2022).

18      Leslie Baxter, *Voicing Relationships: A Dialogic Perspective* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2011) 2.

19      Based on the 2022 (p. 20) report by the US Department of Defense, the Air Force has the largest percentage of female active-duty members (21.5%), while the Marine Corps has the smallest percentage of female active-duty members (9.4%). Hence, on the one hand this low presence of women may explain the resistance encountered when teaching about WPS, and on the other hand, this also reinforces why WPS education is ever so important, in particular for the Marines. See report: https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2022-demographics-report.pdf

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