# Canadian (In)Security: The Strategic Use of Sexual Violence in Canada's Colonial Project

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# Abstract

In recent years, sexual violence against Indigenous women and girls has gained more attention from the general public and policymakers. Nevertheless, the framing of this crisis remains established within the settler colonial structure and an Orientalist mindset as policymakers have ignored how settler colonialism creates insecurity within Canada. This is illustrated through Canada's second National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security which states that "Canada is not a fragile or conflict-affected state" (GAC, 2022a, 8), thereby creating a distinction between Global South states that are deemed fragile. This paper critiques Canada's dismissal of settler colonialism as a source of insecurity by illustrating how rape as a weapon of war is used within Canada as a settler colonial elimination strategy. Through employing a policy analysis of Canada's Women, Peace and Security Action Plan, this thesis demonstrates how Canada continues to hide behind a benevolent mask and overlooks the current gendered impacts of settler colonialism. By utilizing feminist security studies in tandem with Indigenous studies and post-colonial theory this paper challenges what it means for a state to be secure. It highlights how conflict-related policies privilege Global North states by ignoring settler colonialism.

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# Introduction

Since July of 2023, numerous protests have taken place across Canada to urge the provincial government of Manitoba and the federal government to support the search of a landfill in the Winnipeg area for the remains of two murdered Indigenous women. Police suspect that Morgan Harris and Marcedes Myran were killed, and their bodies discarded in a private landfill (Forester, 2023). Their bodies have still not been found and the Government of Manitoba and the federal government are slow to act in searching for these women (Malone, 2023). The murders of these Indigenous women stand in the larger backdrop of Canada's history of discounting settler colonial violence. According to the National Inquiry (2019), the term Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) is used to depict Indigenous women and girls who have experienced systemic colonial violence including sexual violence and violent physical assaults causing their death or disappearance. The cases of the MMIWG are a long-standing issue in Canada as sexual violence and the targeting of Indigenous women and girls is a well-used colonial strategy that could be traced back to initial contact (Bourgeois, 2018). European colonizers have used sexual violence against Indigenous nations since they first arrived to the land that is now called Canada. This strategy continued to be used by settlers during the residential school period as a form of punishment for Indigenous children (Bourgeois, 2018). The legacy of such violence continues to this day with almost half of all Indigenous women and girls experiencing sexual assault at some point in their lives (Heidinger, 2022).

In recent years, the issue of sexual violence against Indigenous women and girls has received increased attention. This is partly due to the release of the Final Report of the National Inquiry into MMIWG and the decades of activism from Indigenous organizations. The report

gives insight into the reality of many First Nation, Inuit, and Metis women and girls by showcasing their experiences of gender and sexual violence. These cases reveal the very real and often unseen insecurity within Canada's borders.

Security is a difficult concept to define as it can be conceptualized in many ways. Security studies scholar, Jill Steans (2013), explains that a broad definition of security is the state of being safe and free from violence or harm. However, this paper utilizes a feminist and Indigenous definition of security. Within feminist security studies, security is defined as multidimensional and highly influenced by social hierarchies as well as traditional forms of violence (Steans, 2013). This perspective on security foregrounds gender but also recognizes how other parts of a person's or group's identity can intersect with gender to influence their experience of insecurity. Indigenous perspectives on security, on the other hand, emphasize the protection of traditions and culture as well as the body. Agnieszka Szpak (2017) states "Human security of indigenous peoples…embraces health, education, housing, employment, development and environmental protection, [and the] protection of traditional values and customs of indigenous peoples" (92). Thus, security within this thesis includes the protection of the physical body as a well as the cultures and traditions of a person or group from violence that is created by systems of injustice and social hierarchies.

Though sexual violence against Indigenous women and girls has more recently become understood as a national issue, Canada does not utilize the language of war or insecurity to define this issue. Canada's second National Action Plan (NAP) for the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) was released in 2017 and is a foreign and domestic plan impacting how Canada responds to issues of gendered insecurity abroad and at home. Though this plan does speak of Canadian military and

defence organizations working to support women and girls experiencing conflict and conflict-related issues, the Canadian government has not considered Indigenous women and girls to be a part of this group. This is illustrated through the policy as it states, "Canada is not a fragile or conflict-affected state" (Global Affairs Canada [GAC], 2022a, 8). This statement reaffirms Canada's identity as a secure nation-state. Conflict-related sexual violence is a large part of the UN WPS policy and Canada's NAP. Specifically, the WPS policy points out how sexual violence can be used as a tactic of war (United Nations Security Council [UNSC], 2019). This concept is also largely known as rape as a weapon of war and is used to define systematic mass rape, rape as a public spectacle, and forced incest, to enforce submission from an enemy other (Meger, 2016). Sexual violence, including rape, is a powerful tactic of war because it not only affects the individual but also impacts their larger community as it works as "a blow that strikes at the heart of family, community, and national ties" (Meger, 2016, 99). Canada is viewed as a country that is not impacted by rape as a weapon of war and one that takes an active role in Women, Peace and Security goals. Importantly, settler colonialism within Canada is not understood as promoting sexual violence as a tactic of war.

By not including settler colonialism as a producer of insecurity, Indigenous women and girls are being overlooked by policies that centre on sexual violence in times of conflict. Concepts like rape as a weapon of war are commonly used in post-colonial states experiencing conflict and are passed over when speaking of Indigenous women and girls in Canada. This further supports the idea that Canada, and the Global North in general, is secure, and in turn superior to states in the Global South that are deemed insecure. This paper seeks to challenge this perception. In the context of this text, settler colonial violence includes any violent act that harms Indigenous peoples and Indigenous self-determination efforts through the structure of Canada

including institutions or narratives built by the federal and/or provincial government that maintain white racial hierarchy. Settler colonialism has an ongoing presence in Canada and as such the inadequate inclusion of colonialism in Canada's Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan reveals how Canada continues to diminish the present and ongoing effects of colonialism. This paper investigates the hypocrisy in Canada's Women, Peace and Security Agenda. Specifically, this paper asks: To what extent does Canada's approach to national security address settler colonialism? And how does this security framework reproduce power dynamics that privilege Global North states?

In this thesis, I make three interrelated arguments: (1) Rape as a weapon of war is used within Canada's borders as a settler colonial elimination strategy; (2) The use of this strategy against Indigenous women and girls is a clear indicator of Canadian insecurity, which is ignored in Canada's WPS NAP; (3) By ignoring settler colonialism as a source of insecurity, Canada and international organizations like the United Nations Security Council maintain settler colonial violence and Global North hegemony.

To demonstrate this reasoning this paper will first analyze particular cases where Indigenous women are targeted with sexual violence, highlighting the essential political role Indigenous women play in self-determination and community-building efforts. This will include showcasing how rape as a weapon of war works within the Canadian settler colonial context. This section will connect feminist security studies theory on rape as a weapon of war to Indigenous studies literature on sexual violence being used against Indigenous women and girls. Using these theories together will help fill the gaps in both fields when it comes to understanding sexual violence against Indigenous women and girls in Canada as an issue of security. Next, my paper will analyze Canada's Women, Peace, and Security National Action Plan and the joint

implementation plan by Indigenous Services Canada and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada. This section also includes a brief analysis of UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and subsequent resolutions, which focus on sexual violence in times of conflict. I will analyze these policies to highlight how settler colonial violence has been overlooked as a source of gendered insecurity and how existing policies for sexual violence in times of conflict are relevant to the cases of Indigenous women and girls in Canada. Finally, this paper will discuss how Canada benefits from not understanding violence against Indigenous women and girls through a security studies lens. Specifically, this section focuses on how Canada's NAP and UN WPS policy minimizes the sexual violence crisis within Canada, protects Canada from taking proper accountability, and supports narratives that maintain Global North hegemony.

## Theoretical Frameworks

### Feminist Security Studies

One of the main theoretical frameworks of this research is feminist security studies, a branch of critical security studies. Like critical security studies, its scholarship is meant to reshape theories on security to consider perspectives not seen in traditional security studies research (Wibben, 2011). Scholars in feminist security studies have pushed for the acceptance of an alternative understanding of insecurity and violence that "go beyond the traditional military configurations of the discipline of [international relations]" (Wibben, 2011, 5). Traditional security studies literature concentrates on state actors and their attempts to achieve security through military means rather than the lived experiences of people experiencing conflict (Wibben, 2011). This state-centric approach focuses on how the state has a responsibility to

"provide protection from the actual or potential violence of excluded 'others' ('foreigners')" (Steans, 2013, 116).

There are several forms of security studies that take a more people-focused approach. For example, scholars of human security concentrate on people as "the subject of security" rather than citizens or the state (Steans, 2013, 118). Human security centres on various sources and forms of insecurity that move beyond militaristic ideas centred on state borders and focus instead on topics like poverty and human rights. Although feminist security studies theory often concentrations on people as well, it is different from human security in that it "foreground[s] gender in discussions of security" and argues that "gender hierarchies and inequalities in power constitute a major source of domination and obstacle to the achievement of security" (Steans, 2013, 121). The feminist security studies framework also comprises an intersectional research approach. This includes identifying the unique experiences that are created when race, indigeneity, gender, and nationality intersect. This framework allows for examining how women are unique political actors who assert their agency differently and have different experiences than men in conflict situations. Because feminist security studies provides a ground-up intersectional approach to the study of security, it is the ideal framework for investigating the gendered and colonial experiences of Indigenous women and girls. Gomes and Marques (2021) explain that "Feminist approaches to security and decolonial feminism…complement structural analysis by exposing the modern state as a gendered and racialized construction" (82).

This thesis primarily focuses on the concept of rape as a weapon of war. Rape as a weapon of war originates from feminist security studies theory and identifies how at times of war or conflict women are deliberately targeted with sexual violence. Many different perspectives within this concept identify why women may be raped during war ranging from the use of rape

to shame targeted communities to the genocidal goals of changing the DNA of a population (Kaufman & Williams, 2010). This paper focuses on how sexual violence is used to assert power over Indigenous peoples through connection the body has to identity, land, and nation. Feminist security studies largely focuses on the connection the female body has to the nation. For example, feminist security studies scholar Doris E. Buss argues that in times of war, women are seen as embodiments of the nation; an attack on women is thus not just an attack on them as individuals but also on the nation. This concept sheds light on the important political role women play in their communities, which not only includes traditional representations of political participation such as participating in protest but also the political role women play at home. Violence against women has a large impact on the nation because it has detrimental effects on the families and communities of the women assaulted as well (Kuokkanen, 2019).

Settler Colonial Studies and Indigenous Studies

This thesis also utilizes Indigenous studies and settler colonial studies in conversation with feminist security studies to investigate how settler colonial violence produces insecurity within the Canadian context. Indigenous studies and settler colonial studies provide the theoretical tools to analyze Canada's settler colonial context. Settler colonial studies is focused on interpreting settler colonial structures and its ongoing presence in states like Canada. Indigenous studies, on the other hand, is headed by Indigenous scholars and focuses on Indigenous knowledge and histories to understand colonialism (Konishi, 2019). These two frameworks are interrelated and often used together. One of the core tenets of settler colonial studies is that settler colonialism is not an event but an ongoing structure (Wolfe, 2006). This frames settler colonialism as a land-based project focused on eliminating the people Indigenous to the land and forming a colonial society in their place. It relies on the death and destruction of

Indigenous communities and cultures because their existence counters the ability of settler states to claim authority over Indigenous lands (Wolfe, 2006). This theory recognizes the ongoing role settler colonialism has in Canada in promoting the structural and cultural genocide of Indigenous peoples.

In Indigenous studies, many theories focus on the relationship between Indigenous peoples, land, body, and kinship networks. An Indigenous studies framework allows for the reassessment of rape as a weapon of war in a way that includes Indigenous worldviews about relationality. Starblanket and Kiiwetinepinesiik (2018) explain relationality as "well-suited to demonstrate that gender classifications are not biologically or spiritually determined but are social and cultural productions shaped in relation to colonial and decolonial projects" (188). This suggests that the way bodies are understood is socially and culturally dependent and interrelated with aspects beyond the body. This concept is also known as the Indigenous land-body framework and explains the inextricable connection between Indigenous bodies and Indigenous land (Simpson 2016). This theoretical framework specifically focuses on how the bodies of Indigenous women and girls are representations of Indigenous sovereignty; harming Indigenous women equates to harming the land and Indigenous governing systems that are connected to the land (Simpson, 2016).

Post-Colonial Theory: Orientalism

Utilizing feminist security studies in tandem with Indigenous studies and settler colonial studies is a critical approach to understanding security. This helps critique the Orientalist underpinnings of security narratives that are entrenched in international security discourse. These perspectives often portray the Global North as secure and the Global South as insecure and violent. Having these assumptions about Eastern and Western countries pulls from post-colonial

theory and specifically Edward Said's work regarding Orientalism. In Said's (1979) ground-breaking work, the author uses Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony to explain how European or Western superiority exists because it is accepted as a superior culture by both the West and the East. Cultural hegemony explains how the domination of a specific group is framed as common sense to maintain an established world order (Lears, 1985). Said's Orientalism depicts how prevalent colonial ideas still are in present-day society by revealing Western epistemological understandings of the East. This concept illustrates that the West or Global North has a clear bias towards the East or Global South which is reflected in the still present imperial and colonial relationships of power between them (Said, 1979). Said (1979) explains that Orientalism does not necessarily create these power structures but instead builds off and expands existing inequalities between the West and the East through discourse. It is through discourse that identities are formulated and maintained; homogenizing both Western and Eastern identities to make it easier to maintain the status quo (Said, 1979). Thus, Orientalism is less about creating the identity of the East and more about maintaining the identity and higher status of the West. Furthermore, Said claims that Western identity is created as an offset of a constructed Eastern or Oriental identity, which suggests that the West is the West because the East is *other*. In this paper, Orientalism is used in conversation with the concept of Global North hegemony to explore how settler colonialism is maintained through Orientalist ideas. I critique how Canada's WPS NAP and the UN WPS policy uses the framework of security to reproduce power dynamics that frame the Global North as superior to the Global South by specifically disregarding the insecurity settler colonialism creates.

## Methodology

Feminist security studies theory not only frames the main arguments of this thesis but also influences research methodology. No specific methodology is inherently feminist, rather the use of the methodology through feminist and gender specific lens is what makes a research method feminist (Beetham and Demetriades, 2007). Specifically, the methodology needs to allow the researcher to assess hierarchies of power while including diverse voices. In my research, I have utilized narrative inquiry when investigating the experiences of sexual violence of Indigenous women and girls as it allowed me to include Indigenous voices in research about Indigenous communities. Indigenous scholar Georgina Martin (2018) speaks on how narrative inquiry is used by Indigenous researchers as a method to relive stories in a way that promotes healing. The method is used to teach others "rather than intensify… deeply rooted emotional scars" (191). As a settler doing research on the experiences of Indigenous women and girls, I have tried to ensure that the stories I have used are one's Indigenous people have chosen to share, and that the speaker was expecting their experiences of sexual violence to be the main focus. For example, I used stories written in the *National Inquiry for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* as the individuals mentioned in the report have chosen to share their stories in a context that focuses on their experiences of sexual violence. For the stories that are not shared by survivors of sexual violence, but by journalists I have tried to use articles from Indigenous news organizations to maintain the presence of Indigenous voices. For example, I used ICT news, an Indigenous led and focused news organization as a source. Sharing the stories of Indigenous women and girls is an important part of this project as it allows the reader to gain a better understanding of the lived reality of Indigenous people. Indigenous scholars like Audra Simpson (2016) have used the stories and experiences of specific Indigenous women to properly

reflect the reality of settler colonial structures. The use of stories allows both Indigenous and non-Indigenous readers to grasp a better understanding of the situation. As critical race theory scholar, Richard Delgado (1989) explains, stories are an important part of connecting different communities because "stories humanize us" and allow others to empathize and understand each other (2440).

In this project quantitative research methods have also been employed with the qualitative narrative inquiry. The quantitative research includes a descriptive analysis of existing data about Indigenous women's experiences of sexual violence in resources such as Statistics Canada and *The Final Report into National Inquiry for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women*. Descriptive analysis includes the use of statistics and existing quantitative data to "describe, explain, and interpret the conditions of the present" (Mohajan, 2020, 59). In this thesis the analysis is used to showcase the extent of the issue in Indigenous communities compared to non-Indigenous communities. This analysis helps illustrate how Indigenous women and girls experience higher rates of sexual violence because of their Indigenous identity. These conclusions have been used in conversation with qualitative findings to ensure the experiences of these individuals are not to numbers but instead represented as human experiences.

A major part of this thesis also includes a policy analysis of Canada's Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) National Action Plan (NAP). A policy analysis includes investigating "what policy-relevant elements carry or convey meaning, what these meanings are, who is making them, and how they are being communicated" (Yanow, 2007, 111). As a researcher I have analyzed Canada's NAP through both a feminist and post-colonial lens highlighting the themes and narratives within this policy that support the idea of Canada as a secure nation. In interpreting these documents through a specific lens, I have also participated as a "meaning-

maker" (Yanow, 2007, 111). The WPS NAP has both a foreign and a domestic policy aspect to it. I have analyzed how the National Action Plan is written differently in the foreign and domestic aspects focusing specifically on how sexual violence in Indigenous communities is portrayed. The NAP is also organized with different partners in mind. Thus, I have analyzed the most recent progress reports and implementation plans from the NAP partners, specifically, the report on the joint partnership between Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC). Since Canada's NAP was created in association with the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions, I have also analyzed how sexual violence in times of conflict is understood in these policy documents. UN Security Council Resolution 2467 is the most recent document on sexual violence in times of conflict and one Canada has supported.

Lastly, I have employed a discourse analysis of United Nations Security Council meetings of the last year. A discourse analysis helps a researcher interpret specific texts and dialogues (Gill, 2000). However, in the case of my thesis what is particularly important about a discourse analysis is the importance the method gives to the act of discourse. A key feature of this method is its concern with "action orientation" which suggests that people use discourse as a social practice to convey what they deem important and worth talking about (Gill, 2000, 177). Furthermore, whether a topic is discussed within discourse allows the researcher to understand whether the discussant believes this topic fits within the larger genre of the discourse (Fairclough, 2003). For example, in this thesis I have examined the number of times conflict-related sexual violence or rape is mentioned concerning a Global South conflict, the Syrian Civil War, and have compared it to the number of times these concepts are mentioned concerning Indigenous women and girls in Canada in the first six months of 2023. The frequency of which

each conflict is discussed in these meetings reveals which conflicts the UN Security Council and partnering states give importance to and understand through a security studies framework. I have also analyzed these meetings through a post-colonial and feminist security studies lens to understand the ways Canada and Global South states, like Syria, are discussed in relation to women's safety and conflict-related sexual violence within Security Council meetings. I have analyzed the reports for general conceptions about insecurity while investigating how gender and sexual-based violence is understood in these meetings.

## Literature Review

From my survey of existing literature, I could not find any research that specifically addresses my research question though many scholars have researched related topics. There is specific literature on rape as a weapon of war and sexual violence in Indigenous communities, as well as the Women, Peace and Security Agenda's lack of inclusion of colonial and racial injustices, and the benefits of analyzing Indigenous studies through an international lens (Otto, 2009; Shepherd, 2008; Yoshida and Céspedes-Báez, 2021). However, there is a significant gap in the research when it comes to connecting these topics. Specifically, there is a lack of research connecting feminist security studies theory on rape as a weapon of war to Indigenous studies theory on sexual violence as a settler colonial tool against Indigenous women and girls. There is also little research that identifies how settler colonialism in Canada has influenced Canada's WPS NAP. This paper seeks to reduce this gap.

### Literature on Sexual Violence as a Political Tool

Feminist security studies scholars have made breakthroughs in how women have specific experiences in times of conflict. Theorists in this field have already extensively researched how

sexual violence, particularly rape, has been used as a weapon of war and how women are uniquely impacted by conflict due to their gender and role in society (Carter, 2010; Buss, 2009; Danjibo and Akinkuotu, 2019). Scholars like Sara Meger (2016) have explained how sexual violence, specifically rape, is used against women as a symbolic tool that attacks the community and nation by harming women and girls. Many theorists in the field have researched how sexual violence is used to destroy community bonds and thus limit resistance (Isgandarova, 2013; Kaufman and Williams, 2010). However, most scholars have researched this strategy being used in the Global South. For example, there is significant research on how rape has been used as a tactic of war in the Congo (Baaz, 2009; Brown 2012), Yugoslavia (Bergoffen, 2009; Carter 2010), and Rwanda (Buss 2009, Carter 2010). Some scholars like Falcón (2001) have analyzed this strategy being used in Global North countries like the United States, but I could not find any scholarly work that speaks of using feminist security studies in relation to settler colonialism or the specific targeting of Indigenous women in Global North states. The closest topic I could find is Falcón's (2001) article on how sexual violence has been used against illegal migrants crossing the Mexican-U.S. border.

Though researchers have not linked settler colonial violence to sexual violence as a war strategy, many Indigenous scholars have researched sexual violence in Indigenous communities and its broader impacts. Sara Deer (2015) has researched the history of sexual violence being used as a colonial strategy in the U.S. and its ongoing effects on Indigenous nations. Deer's work is particularly important because she not only writes as an Indigenous woman but was also able to visit many Indigenous communities and interview women about their lived experiences. Indigenous scholar, Rauna Kuokkanen (2008) has written about how Indigenous women are made particularly vulnerable to sexual violence because of the structure of settler colonialism

and how it displaces Indigenous women from their traditional land, culture, and community while leaving little economic and political opportunities for them. Many Indigenous scholars have researched the critical political role Indigenous women play in self-determination and resistance efforts (Monchalin 2016, Lawrence and Anderson, 2005) and that it is because of their essential role in Indigenous communities that they are targeted with gender-based violence and particularly sexual violence (Simpson, 2016). Scholars like Rauna Kuokkanen (2019) and Robyn Bourgeois (2018) make it clear that colonial relations have a long history of sexual violence because they are built on patriarchal foundations. According to them, sexual violence functions as an instrument of both patriarchy and colonialism. Robyn Bourgeois (2018) also explains that sexual violence being used against Indigenous women and girls is essential to the racial hierarchy that privileges white settlers making it an effective settler colonial strategy. Bourgeois (2018) explains that this is because sexual violence is used to reiterate hegemonic Canadian discourses that deem Indigenous women as inferior, less than human, and there for settler use. The concept of Indigenous bodies existing inherently for settler use is tied to settler colonial understandings of land. Existing literature in Indigenous studies highlights how Indigenous bodies, particularly those of women, are theorized to be representations of the land and, consequently, are represented as violable with impunity to show ownership and re-emphasize settler claims to the land (Simpson 2016).

Literature on the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda

Significant research has been written about the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in recent years, both as critiques of current national action plans and as commentary on the importance of WPS policy. Political theorist Laura J. Shepherd has written numerous books and articles on the topic. For example, Shepherd (2008) critiques Resolution 1325 for promoting a

divide between rich Global North states and conflict-ridden and post-conflict states, in which a narrative of intervention is pushed. Furthermore, feminist security studies theorists Dianne Otto (2009) and Basu (2016) argue that 1325 has legitimized military interventions in the name of saving women and girls in Global South states. Pratt (2013) similarly states that 1325 re-establishes gendered, racial, and sexual hierarchies and particularly critiques how the policy continues the legacy of colonialism in post-colonial states. These gender-centred critiques focus on how the WPS policy characterizes the Global South as inferior to the Global North. I contribute to this literature by asserting that Canada's WPS NAP characterizes Indigenous nations similarly to how it characterizes Global South states: as needing intervention by a colonial Western power.

One of the larger critiques of many different WPS national action plans is that they often do not consider race and Indigeneity. Yoshida and Céspedes-Báez (2021) write about the WPS Agenda in the Colombian context and explain how the current framework has failed to address the connection between ecological violence and gender-based violence. Yoshida and Céspedes-Báez (2021) make an important point about how the UN's framework does not properly address how Indigenous women have different concerns both during conflict and in post-conflict situations due to their connection to land. Smith and Stavrevska (2022) similarly argue that many WPS national action plans do not consider an intersectional approach to gender-based violence and insecurity. Smith and Stavrevska (2022) compare numerous national action plans, including Canada's, to identify to what extent a state includes intersectionality in its policies. Their work specifically reviews whether states properly assess how colonialism and racial hierarchies may affect women. This thesis adds onto this literature by highlighting how Canada's NAP

inauthentically includes Indigenous women and girls as it does not address how settler colonialism impacts Indigenous communities.

Lastly, Midzain-Gobin and Dunton (2021) explain that within the Canadian context, reconciliation efforts are rarely connected to feminist policymaking. Though the Government of Canada does address issues concerning Indigenous women in the most recent Women, Peace, and Security Action Plan, Midzain-Gobin and Dunton (2021) explain that it is more for rhetorical effect rather than actual policy change. Haastrup and Hagen (2020) build on this argument by explaining that national action plans are often more focused on foreign policy than issues considered domestic. Their research points out how Canada has directed its WPS agenda internationally by focusing on fragile Global South states while not properly including domestic policy that can help Indigenous women within Canada. Haastrup and Hagen (2020) state that WPS national action plans in Global North states are often more focused on foreign policy because they are used as a way to reconstruct differences between Global South and North countries. This is an argument I have also made but by focusing on how sexual violence as a tactic of war is recognized in Canada's NAP and in which contexts. Specifically, I have investigated how Canada recognizes this form of insecurity in Global South states but overlooks it within Canada's settler colonial context to affirm Canada's identity as benevolent and hide settler colonial insecurity.

Literature on Indigeneity in International Relations

Settler colonial studies scholars like Patrick Wolfe (2006) and Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2015) have researched and written about settler colonial violence in depth explaining the relationship between Indigenous experiences of violence to settler colonialism, land dispossession, and racism. However, in recent years other scholars in the field have explored a

more critical perspective by researching the transnational nature of colonialism and how an international relations perspective can be beneficial to settler colonial and Indigenous studies scholarship and visa-versa. Scholars have made the connection between experiences of colonial violence in the Global North and South. For example, Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2012) explain how strategies used in settler colonial countries like Canada and the U.S. that were successful in suppressing Indigenous communities are then used in imperial projects around the world. Their research illustrates how there is a connection between colonial/war strategies used in different parts of the world and how understanding these similarities is important to understanding colonial violence. Other scholars like Mariam Georgis and Nicole V. T. Lugosi-Schimpf (2021) make a connection between Canada and the Middle East and share how international relations theories relate to critical Indigenous studies. This thesis will build on the work of these scholars by exploring how settler colonialism maintains Global hierarchies. Specifically, I highlight how settler colonial and post-colonial structures reproduce power dynamics to support each other.

## Positionality

I have researched this topic from the perspective of a settler and an immigrant. As a Canadian settler, I am very conscious of the importance of highlighting Indigenous voices when discussing Indigenous issues. This is partially why I decided to use Indigenous studies literature as a major theoretical framework in this research and narrative inquiry as a major method of my research. Using this theoretical framework and method ensure that the voices of Indigenous people, and particularly Indigenous women, are present in this research. I am also very conscious of researching this issue in a way that does not promote damage-centred research. Eve Tuck

(2009) explains that damaged-centred research is "research that operates, even benevolently, from a theory of change that establishes harm or injury in order to achieve reparation" (413). To move away from this, I have actively ensured that my project frames Indigenous women not as victims of circumstance but as important political leaders and community members. In this research, I have also employed an ethics of care approach by focusing on the interpersonal nature of human experiences and the responsibility we have towards others. As a researcher, I have actively tried not to let my voice as a settler take over this research but instead highlight the utility in exploring settler colonialism through a feminist security studies and post-colonial theory framework.

My identity as an Indian immigrant has also influenced my choices in this project as my immigrant background influences my understanding of colonialism. As an immigrant from a post-colonial state, it is difficult for me to assess settler colonialism as an isolated phenomenon from other forms of colonialism. It is part of the reason why I believe having a post-colonial lens to this research is essential in understanding global security dynamics.

# Rape as a Weapon of [the Settler-Colonial] War

Understanding rape as a weapon of war includes recognizing how at times of war or conflict women are often intentionally targeted with sexual violence. According to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (2011), sexual violence including "rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy,... [and] enforced sterilization" are constituted as war crimes when used as a tactic of war (6). Furthermore, the UN Security Council Resolution 1820 notes that "women and girls are particularly targeted by the use of sexual violence, including as a tactic of war to humiliate, dominate, instil fear in, disperse and/or forcibly relocate civilian members of a community or ethnic group" (UNSC, 2008, 1).

Rape as a weapon of war is a well-researched phenomenon that has largely been explored in the context of the Global South (Baaz, 2009; Brown 2012; Carter 2010). Settler colonial states, like Canada, have been ignored as sites where sexual violence is used as a tactic of war against those deemed Other. There are few commonalities in how most theorists and policymakers understand rape as a weapon of war. The first is that the focus is almost always on the military, or the abuses done by soldiers in times of war. Leiby (2009) calls them "agents of the state" or people who come to represent the state (454). In a settler colonial context, settlers represent the settler state and its jurisdiction over land. This is illustrated numerous times throughout Canada's history as a settler state. Simpson and Huggil (2022) explain that the first settler cities were created to displace Indigenous nations and secure settler jurisdiction of the land. Gina Starblanket and Dallas Hunt (2020) make a similar point about farmers. As they explain, "Agrarian settlement cemented Indigenous dispossession" and that, once the land "'belonged' to settler farmers, Indigenous peoples could be framed as criminals or… intruders"

(38). If in a traditional understanding of war, soldiers act on behalf of the state, in a settler colonial context settlers act on behalf of the settler state. This idea is cemented in the creation of Indigenous people as enemy others. In the Canadian settler imaginary Indigenous people are framed as threats to settler ways of life; they are outsiders "who want what nationals [settlers] have" (4). For rape to be considered a weapon of war it has to be "implemented for specific political goals" and be systemic in its strategy to harm a nation or group (Hirschauer, 2014, 2). This is also prevalent in the Canadian context as targeting Indigenous women with sexual violence has been used as a colonial strategy for centuries.

There are a variety of reasons why women and girls are targeted with sexual violence in times of war, including causing psychological distress to the individual and the community (Meger, 2016), terrorizing the community to stop resistance (Isgandarova, 2013), and having genocidal goals of changing the DNA of the population (Kaufman & Williams, 2010). Women are particularly targeted with this strategy because, during war, women are seen as embodiments of the nation; an attack on women is thus not just an attack on them as individuals but also on the nation (Buss, 2009). This chapter will focus on three interconnected motives for using sexual violence as a tactic of war against Indigenous women and girls: targeting identity, land, and nation. Indigenous studies scholars have also explored these motivations when researching sexual violence against Indigenous women, however, they have not connected it to feminist security studies literature. This chapter utilizes Indigenous studies and settler colonial studies theory in tandem with feminist security studies literature to illustrate how rape as a weapon of war is used within Canada's borders as a settler colonial elimination strategy. Particularly, this chapter explores how, like war, settler colonialism is about land and power; it plays out on women's bodies in distinct ways as their bodies come to represent more than themselves and

extend to their lands and nations. Using these theories together will help fill the gaps in both fields when it comes to understanding sexual violence against Indigenous women as an issue of insecurity.

This chapter will first provide background information on Indigenous women in Canada and the history of sexual violence Canada has as a settler state. The chapter will then explore how rape as a weapon of war is used within the Canadian settler colonial context to target Indigenous identity, land, and nation while illustrating how each of these categories are interconnected.

## Background on Indigenous Women and Sexual Violence

In late December of 2012, at the peak of the Idle No More movement, a First Nations woman was kidnapped by two white assailants in Thunder Bay, Ontario. The men grabbed her by her hair forcing her into their car and took her to a nearby area where she was "sexually assaulted, strangled and beaten" (Tailman, 2013). While assaulting her, the men called her by a racial slur and told her "You Indians deserve to lose your treaty rights" (Tailman, 2013). This assault happened in the background of the Idle No More Movement, a female-led Indigenous protest for treaty rights that demonstrated the political power Indigenous women hold (John, 2015). This assault can be interpreted as a directed attack on the Idle No More movement and Indigenous resistance. This is illustrated through the Native Youth Sexual Health Network's statement on the assault: "Violence against indigenous women and girls has been, and continues to be used as a weapon of colonialism and a way to undermine the strength of our leadership" (Tailman, 2013).

According to a 2022 Statistics Canada report, 46 percent of Indigenous women have experienced sexual assault in their lifetime. This is significantly higher than the 33 percent of

non-Indigenous women who have experienced sexual assault (Heidinger, 2022). This same report found that the victimization of Indigenous women is higher due to their Indigenous identity and the low socioeconomic status many Indigenous women hold (Heidinger, 2022). Though the report by Statistics Canada states that almost half of all Indigenous women in Canada have experienced sexual assault in their lives, the actual number is most likely much higher as sexual assaults are notoriously under-reported. Sarah Deer (2015), an Indigenous studies scholar, illustrates the magnitude of this issue perfectly in their statement: "Imagine living in a world in which almost every woman you know has been raped. Now imagine living in a world in which four generations of women and their ancestors have been raped" (12). Although Deer is writing about settler colonialism within the United States, her words are still relevant in the Canadian context as the U.S. and Canada have similar statics on sexual violence in Indigenous communities and a similar relationship with settler colonialism.

Sexual violence against Indigenous people has a long history in Canada. Rand C., an Indigenous man, discloses that his grandfather spoke to him about his experience growing up in a residential school and how he would "hear his friends getting dragged out in the hallways at night and raped throughout the evenings" (National Inquiry, 2019, 266). Bourgeois (2018) explains that violence against Indigenous women, particularly sexual violence, was essential to the residential school system as it supported the goal of eliminating Indigenous nations. Rand's grandfather telling him about his residential school experience is a rare occurrence in Indigenous communities as many survivors found it difficult to cope with the trauma and were afraid of the stigma they would encounter in their communities if they spoke out (National Inquiry, 2019, 265). This legacy has continued in contemporary Indigenous communities as survivors of sexual violence rarely find the support needed to help them. Corinne Ducharme is a Cree woman who

has experienced violence her whole life. She speaks of growing up in a violent household, being sexually assaulted when she was 30 and experiencing intimate partner violence (Martin and Walia, 2019, 33-34). In her statement to Vancouver's Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, she explains that this was her first time telling her story and that she never believed she could speak about the gendered violence she experienced. She speaks of her experience of being date-raped after being drugged at a bar at age 30. Corinne didn't believe she could tell anyone about what happened out of fear of stigma and didn't trust the police to help her (Martin and Walia, 2019, 33-34). The lack of resources available to Indigenous women and girls also meant that she was unable to get counselling. Corinne explains how these experiences ultimately isolated her from her community and affected her children as well, with whom she now has little to no contact (Martin and Walia, 2019, 33-34). Corrine's experience illustrates how sexual violence divides families and communities.

In general, sexual violence is under-reported, but this is particularly the case in Indigenous communities due to the stigma of being a victim of sexual violence and the lack of resources and support available. When Indigenous women report their experiences with sexual violence, they are often not believed or are blamed for their assault. For example, Cara D., a 17-year-old Indigenous girl who was a victim of attempted rape found the courage to report the crime to the police. Instead of helping Cara, the police questioned her numerous times about the assault and asked, "Are you lying to us?" while claiming that she might need to do a lie detector test (Human Rights Watch, 2013). The man who assaulted Cara was not charged with any crimes after a brief arrest. Human Rights Watch (2013) interviewed numerous Indigenous women and girls and found this to be a common occurrence in cases where Indigenous women reported sexual violence. A large obstacle in reporting these crimes also occurs when their perpetrator is a

police or RCMP officer as it causes victims to fear retaliation if they were to report the crime. Human Rights Watch (2013) interviewed Gabriella P., a houseless Indigenous woman living in B.C. about her experience with sexual violence. Gabriella reported being raped by police officers in her town several times and threatened with death afterwards if she told anyone about the incident. Human Rights Watch (2013) found countless incidents of RCMP and police officers sexually assaulting Indigenous women and girls, especially when they were in vulnerable positions and needed help from the police.

## Targeting Identity

Sexual violence is known for causing psychological consequences like depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, sleep disturbances, withdrawal from relationships, sexual dysfunctions, and attempted suicides (World Health Organization, 2002). Therefore, it has lasting effects beyond the initial act of violence. However, in the cases of Indigenous women and girls, sexual violence also becomes a way to target and shape the identity of the victim to better serve the perpetrator.

The men who assaulted the Indigenous woman during the Idle No More Movement called her a racist slur that dehumanizes Indigenous women by hypersexualizing them. Emma LaRocque (1990) explains that the stereotype of this slur is the "female counterpart to the Indian male 'savage'" and as such characterizes the woman as if "she has 'no human face' [and]... is lustful, immoral, unfeeling and dirty". The hyper-sexualization and objectification of Indigenous women are common in settler colonial Canadian discourse and create an image of Indigenous women that is inherently sexual and available for exploitation (Bourgeois, 2018). As stated in the National Inquiry into the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (2019) "Colonial structures go beyond the physical… and also include assaults on ways of knowing and understanding"

building narratives that promote and justify colonial violence (232). This is because violence becomes justified when an individual's identity is reduced to the Other and they are dehumanized (Razack, 2012). Once the violence has occurred it has a subsequent effect of continuing the cycle of dehumanization. This can be seen in Gabriella's case as the initial assault from the police officers dehumanized her in their eyes, further perpetuating an identity of her as a rapeable Indigenous woman and reproducing violent interactions. Critical race theorist, Sherene Razack (2012), explains that in assaulting someone the individual imprints their power and beliefs onto the bodies of those they are harming which gives the abuser the power to form the identity of the victim as less than human. Indigenous women are thus dehumanized both through and for rape. Rape as a strategic tool in settler colonialism becomes an incredibly effective way to reduce the identities of Indigenous women to animals that require violence continuing the cycle of colonial violence. Sunera Thobani (2007) shares this perspective as they state that the settler colonial Canadian state requires not only the acquisition of Indigenous land but also the dehumanization of Indigenous peoples to succeed in its colonial goals. As settler-colonialism requires the elimination of Indigenous peoples and communities (Wolfe 2006), narratives about identity can be understood as an important settler-colonial strategy. McCallum and Perry (2018) emphasize the importance of these narratives as they state, "The conquest of Indigenous territories does not just happen through guns, diseases, and administrative systems. It also happens through ideas and ideologies" (8). By targeting identity, the assailants do not just target a person's self-esteem but how that group is understood by outsiders. Thus, it also paves the way for future instances of violence.

## Targeting Land

Although traditional feminist security studies literature has discussed how land is targeted in war it rarely makes the connection between the bodies of women and land. Indigenous studies literature, on the other hand, has heavily focused on the unique connection Indigenous women's bodies have with the land. Canada's settler colonial project is a land-based project and thus sexual violence against Indigenous women must be understood through the Indigenous land-body frameworks. Land-body frameworks are written about extensively by Indigenous scholars like Audra Simpson. Simpson (2016) has argued that Indigenous women's bodies have historically been understood as a representation of land and Indigenous kinship; that because Indigenous women are seen as the land they are also seen as a "matter to be extracted from, used, sullied, taken from, over and over again". Thus, raping Indigenous women signifies raping Indigenous land and governance structures. The raping of Indigenous women reaffirms settler claims to land because it reiterates the idea that Indigenous bodies and land are there for settler use. Bourgeois (2018) reaffirms this idea as they state that the oppression of Indigenous women was essential to the settler colonial goal of taking land "as lands were organized matrilineally in many pre-colonial Indigenous nations, with Indigenous women holding power over possession and usage" (71).

This concept was also illustrated through the assault on the Indigenous woman during the Idle No More movement. Her attackers said, "You Indians deserve to lose your treaty rights" (Tailman, 2013). This is a possessive statement that speaks of ownership of the land. The attackers speak as if settlers have graciously allowed Indigenous people rights to their own land that they can take away at any chance. It also illustrates how the settler-men believed they had to harm Indigenous people, specifically women, to demonstrate their ownership and right to the

land. Patrick Wolfe (2006) explains that settler colonialism relies on the narrative that the land is and always has been, in some way, under settler ownership; the existence of Indigenous peoples counters this fantasy and puts settler jurisdiction in question.

Though the existence of Indigenous peoples plays a passive role in self-determination efforts, in that their existence alone challenges settler legitimacy, Indigenous communities have also actively worked on maintaining their culture and defending their rights and responsibilities to the land. This can be seen through the Wet'suwet'en Land Back movement, which protested the building of a pipeline on traditional Wet'suwet'en territory (Spice, 2018). Sexual violence is often used to counter resistance efforts like the Land Back protests. This is because sexual violence is an "effective means of creating a climate of helplessness, vulnerability, and dependence" (Meger, 2016, 100). Meger (2016) explains that in impacting the civilian population in this way rape as a weapon of war becomes an effective tool in pushing a population to "evacuate a region or is at least less resistant to the seizure of control of lucrative resources" (100). This can be seen in the Canadian context through the increased incidents of sexual violence against Indigenous women when industry projects camp near Indigenous areas. The National Inquiry (2019) found that extractive projects, specifically, caused incidents of violence against Indigenous women to increase including rape and assault. They found a specific case where young girls were assaulted by employees working on extracting forest resources on traditional Indigenous territory (National Inquiry, 2019). Violence is a common strategy used to gain land and resources and is not unique to settler-colonial states as it is often used in imperial projects (Razack, 2012).

## Targeting Community and Nation

Indigenous land-body frameworks illustrate that Indigenous bodies are inherently connected to land. However, Indigenous kinship and governance structures are also connected to land (Simpson, 2016). Understanding the connection between Indigenous bodies, identity, land, and governance is important to understanding why Indigenous women are specifically targeted in the settler colonial project. As Simpson (2016) states:

"An Indian woman's body in settler regimes such as the US [and] Canada is loaded with meaning – signifying other political orders, land itself, of the dangerous possibility of reproducing Indian life and most dangerously, other political orders. *Other* life forms, other sovereignties, other forms of political will".
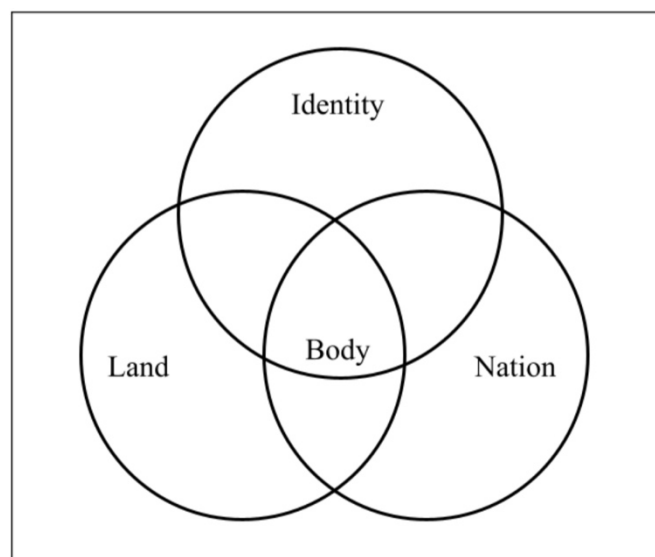


Feminist security studies theorists have also written about the symbolic role of women's bodies. In times of war, women become the embodiment of the nation (Buss, 2009). Raping women thus becomes a way to illustrate how one nation is more powerful and worthy than another. Coomaraswamy (2003) explains that in the Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda, and Kosovo conflicts, sexual violence was used as a way to illustrate the incompetency of enemy men

because they could not protect their women from being assaulted. Rape was a tool to show "domination over the males of the community or group that is under attack" (Coomaraswamy, 2003, 92). Since men are most commonly viewed as protectors or soldiers of a state, violating an enemy's female family members is meant to illustrate how the perpetrators are more powerful and capable than their enemy. Largely due to the heteropatriarchal nature of rape, there is a great deal of stigma around sexual violence. This stigma is used against the enemy as "Violating women sexually is one way to assert domination over the 'other' in the most humiliating way possible" (Kaufman & Williams, 2010, 37). Rather than connecting women's bodies to land, feminist security studies theory connects women's bodies to the state and state honour.

Beyond impacting state and community honour, rape as a weapon of war harms the core of the community. As Brenda Fitzpatrick (2016) states, both the people who are raped and the members of their community are affected by and disempowered by wartime rape. Sarah Deer (2015) shares this perspective in the settler colonial context as they state, "It is not only Native women who have been raped but Native nations as a whole" (12). Raping of women in war has been known to be used to humiliate both the individual and their community thus breaking down community bonds (Isgandarova, 2013). This is prevalent in Corinne Ducharme's case as she explains that her experiences with sexual violence, including her sexual assault, made her feel ashamed and isolated from her community. This is detrimental to Indigenous communities because Indigenous women play important roles in nation-building and self-determination efforts. In the traditional sense, Indigenous women hold political power through their leadership positions in many Indigenous nations and organizations. Historically, due to settler colonial patriarchal customs, many Indigenous women were restricted from holding positions of power by the settler state. However, as Lawrence and Anderson (2005) explain Indigenous women

"may have maintained traditional leadership as clan mothers, or have worked in other ways to re-awaken or strengthen the traditional systems of government in their nations" (2). Indigenous women in Canada, like many women around the world, are also often "primary caregivers" for their families and communities as they play an important role in caring for the children and passing down culture and traditions. (Lawrence, and Anderson, 2005, 2). As mentioned above sexual violence can cause many women to feel isolated and separated from their communities restricting their ability to pass down traditions and provide community support. Sexual violence can thus also be connected to ethnocide or the destruction of cultures and ways of living and thinking.

Maintaining cultural norms and traditions is essential to Indigenous self-determination efforts as cultural sovereignty is intrinsically connected to Indigenous sovereignty. Cultural sovereignty is defined as encompassing "the spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical aspects of [Indigenous] lives" (Coffey and Tsosie, 2001, 209). This concept highlights how sovereignty is born within Indigenous nations through their cultural practices and traditions rather than something dependent on acknowledgement from the settler government (Coffey and Tsosie, 2001). Because Indigenous women play an important role in reproducing cultural practices through caretaking and leadership roles they are essential in promoting cultural sovereignty and Indigenous sovereignty, in general. Redbird (1995) shares this perspective by stating that Indigenous women play important roles politically, spiritually, and culturally becoming the "backbone" of Indigenous sovereignty (as cited in Deer, 2015, 13). Indigenous women and girls also have essential roles in community crisis management, a problem colonialism makes constant (Lawrence, and Anderson, 2005). In isolating Indigenous women from their communities sexual violence is instrumental in tearing down self-determination efforts. Rape

thus becomes a powerful strategic tool in diminishing Indigenous self-determination efforts

through targeting Indigenous women and their political roles in their communities.

# Fabricated Security

Political theorists Midzain-Gobin and Dunton (2021) argue that within Canadian policy and official acts, "reconciliation and feminist policy-making has been treated as mutually exclusive" as neither has come to "substantively inform the other" (31). This chapter demonstrates how Midzain-Gobin and Dunton's argument is persuasive, especially regarding Canada's policy on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS). This chapter employs a policy analysis of Canada's WPS National Action Plan (NAP), and subsequent implementation plans by supporting partners to illustrate how Canada continues to ignore settler colonialism as a source of insecurity, specifically regarding Indigenous women and girl's experiences with sexual violence.

The Women, Peace and Security agenda is a powerful instrument that mainstreams gender while addressing how "social, cultural and political barriers" limit women from politically participating in their communities (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.). The WPS agenda was born out of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. UNSCR 1325 was the first resolution to acknowledge how women and girls are uniquely and disproportionately affected by conflict (Government of Canada, 2023). Thus, when it comes to analyzing Canada's commitment to protecting Indigenous women and girls the WPS policy can reveal if and how Canada addresses gendered insecurity created by settler colonialism. A significant factor of the WPS agenda is that it moves away from framing women and girls as "mere victims to active participants in peacebuilding and conflict resolution" (Pratt, 2013, 774). Thus, it can become an important tool in including Indigenous women and girls in policy that directly responds to sexual violence in Indigenous communities allowing for a ground up approach that empowers Indigenous communities. Utilizing WPS policy also allows for bringing an international

perspective to sexual violence against Indigenous women and girls, especially because it can illustrate what policies are being used around the world to address similar issues.

This chapter will first explain the history of UNSCR 1325 including its relationship to UNSCR 2467, international law, and Canada's WPS NAP. After providing the background on this policy, I will then analyze Canada's most recent NAP, the 2017-2022 action plan, to illustrate how it has not properly assessed sexual violence against Indigenous women as a security issue. Subsequently, I will also analyze Indigenous Services Canada and Crown Indigenous Relations Joint Implementation Plan on WPS. The policy analysis will illustrate that Canada's NAP and the Departmental Implementation Plans' focus on external issues is detrimental to not only Indigenous nations in Canada but also Global South states.

## UNSCR 1325 and Subsequent Resolutions

Canada's WPS National Action Plan was created to fulfill Canada's commitment to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on WPS. UN Security Council Resolution 2467 is a successor of Resolution 1325 and continues to express the importance of women's participation in peacebuilding and acknowledges how women and girls are disproportionately affected by conflict-related sexual violence. Specifically, the resolution recognizes:

> "...The disproportionate impact of sexual violence in armed conflict and post-conflict situations on women and girls is exacerbated by discrimination against women and girls and by the under-representation of women in decision-making and leadership roles, the impact of discriminatory laws, the gender-biased enforcement and application of existing laws, harmful social norms and practices, structural inequalities, and discriminatory views on women or gender roles in society, and lack of availability of services for survivors" (UNSC, 2019, 2).

UNSCR 1325 represents many years of feminist activism concentrated on women's rights in times of conflict (Shepherd, 2021). There have been nine subsequent resolutions since the creation of 1325 in 2000. The most recent resolutions are 2467, which focuses on conflict-related sexual violence, and 2493, which focuses on context-specific processes for women's participation in peacebuilding. The main pillars of the Women, Peace and Security resolutions are focused on women's participation in security and peace decision-making, the protection of women's rights in conflict and post-conflict zones, gender-specific recovery efforts, and the prevention of sexual violence in times of conflict (Shepherd, 2021). In addition, resolution 2467 also asserts that sexual violence in times of conflict often occurs as a strategy of war and that states have a responsibility to protect their citizens from sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations (UNSC, 2019). It should be noted that there are minimal mentions of Indigenous peoples and traditions in the Women, Peace, and Security resolutions, with UNSCR 1325 being the only one that mentions the importance of including "Indigenous processes for conflict resolution" (UNSC, 2000, 3). Because of Resolution 1325, and subsequent resolutions, many states, including Canada, created their own WPS National Action Plans to express their commitment to the U.N's implementation plan and the safety of women in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Canada's National Action Plan

Canada's Women, Peace, and Security National Action Plan affirms Canada's commitment to protecting women from gendered and sexual violence in times of conflict. Canada has had two NAPs so far and at the time of writing this thesis the most recent plan is the 2017-2022 NAP. Canada is due to release another action plan in 2024.

One of Canada's main objectives for the WPS national action plan is to "Prevent, respond to and end impunity for sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated in conflict" (5). The National Action Plan (NAP) states that in acting on these objectives Canada has the opportunity to "decrease the threats to international security" (6). Due to the focus being on international security rather than national security, Canada's WPS policy is framed as more of a foreign policy with some domestic dimensions. As such, most of the policy is centred around providing resources abroad rather than focusing on how insecurity exists within Canada's borders and the unique ways it presents itself in the settler colonial context.

A pattern prevalent throughout Canada's National Action Plan is Canada's lack of acknowledgement of settler colonialism as a present and ongoing threat to Indigenous communities and Canada's security as a whole. Much of the language separates Canada from states impacted by conflict in more conventional ways like terrorism or civil war. This is illustrated through the statement "Canadians want more gender equal and stable societies…" and "we hope the… action plan inspires our international partners to support women in creating an inclusive and peaceful world" (GAC, 2022a, 3). As demonstrated, Canada's WPS policy is largely focused on external issues and urges other countries to meet the standard Canada is setting rather than focusing on the state's own shortcomings. The language used throughout the policy frames Canada as being conflict-free and not impacted by conflict-related issues. This is illustrated by the statement "Canada is not a fragile or conflict-affected state" (GAC, 2022a, 8). This framing of insecurity creates a dichotomy which differentiates Global South states from Global North states. Though Canada does not address specific countries in its WPS policy the depiction of conflict states that are discussed suggests that Canada is speaking of various Global South states. This is also exemplified through the statement "Two billion people live in countries

affected by fragility, conflict and violence" in which the policy cites the World Bank (Global Affairs Canada, 2022a, 6). In this specific citation, the World Bank (2023) focuses on how fragility, conflict, and violence impact low and middle-income states, specifically mentioning how countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America are deeply impacted by conflict. The photos used in the NAP are also often of women and girls of colour from Global South states. Pictures like the one below illustrate how Canada, and specifically white Canadians, are framed as saviours of Global South states and people of colour.


Photo from Canada's 2017-2022 NAP. Master Corporal David Hardwick, DND/FAC

Haastrup and Hagen (2020) agree that Canada's NAP creates two distinct categories of nation-states as they explain that within the policy "fragile states and conflict contexts dominate – and stand in as proxies for similar countries in the Global South" (141). Creating a separate identity for Canada is further promoted when the WPS NAP states that "many conflicts are linked to violent extremism and ideologies that subjugate women and girls" (GAC, 2022a, 2). This ignores that European patriarchal ideologies on gender have historically and currently continue to harm Indigenous women and girls by working to destroy traditional Indigenous

understandings of gender which frame women as "valued, honoured, respected, and viewed as sacred human beings" (Monchalin, 2016, 176). Unlike many Indigenous cultures, settler structures make it difficult for women to hold leadership positions and have a voice in politics (Monchalin, 2016). This suggests that within Canada's context settler ideologies can be understood as a form of extremism that subjugates Indigenous women and girls through targeting Indigenous cultures and worldviews. Through the WPS NAP, Canada frames itself as both benevolent and of a higher status than other states experiencing conflict while ignoring how its own colonial and patriarchal structures harm Indigenous women and girls.

The Canadian government does acknowledge that gender-based violence exists within Canada and largely affects Indigenous women and girls but does not connect this to present settler-colonial policies and structures. In 2021, the federal government worked with Indigenous communities and organizations, including the National Family and Survivors Circle, to create a National Action Plan for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). The federal government contributes to this action plan through the Federal Pathway which "is the Government of Canada's proposed path forward to end violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people" (Core Working Group, 2021, 53). In the Federal Pathway, the Canadian government works in four areas including human safety and security. The most recent progress report on the Federal Pathways reveals that the vast majority of the initiatives in the human security section are focused on providing housing, increasing access to education, and bolstering support for Indigenous community organizations (CIRNAC, 2023). Although these initiatives are very important as higher rates of sexual violence are connected to a lack of housing and economic and community support (National Inquiry, 2019), they do not directly address the violence Indigenous women and girls experience. There are only two initiatives that

directly address violence experienced by Indigenous communities: Renewing Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy and Advancing the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence. The Gender-Based Violence (GBV) National Action Plan specifically recognizes that Indigenous women and girls "experience violence differently than non-Indigenous peoples" (CIRNAC, 2023). The GBV NAP has five pillars, including Pillar Four – Implementing Indigenous-Led Approaches. This highlights how the Government of Canada is making active efforts to support Indigenous organizations with the issue of sexual violence in Indigenous communities (Women and Gender Equality Canada, 2022). However, this is the entirety of Canada's inclusion of Indigenous women and girls in the GBV NAP. Pillars Three and Five, which focus on the justice system and the social infrastructure, respectively, have no mention of Indigenous women and girls. Colonialism is also not mentioned at any point in the GBV NAP. This again reiterates that when cases of insecurity are discussed the Canadian government separates itself from its settler colonial past and present. Furthermore, there is no evidence that Canada's MMIWG NAP and GBV NAP are informing the WPS NAP. This connects back to Midzain-Gobin and Dunton's (2021) statement on how within Canada reconciliation and feminist policies often do not inform each other. However, I would argue that Canada has made some progress in connecting reconciliation and feminist policy but specifically continues to ignore the possibility of feminist security policy informing reconciliation and vise-versa.

The WPS NAP also points out that Indigenous women face higher rates of violence, including sexual violence, due to their intersecting identities of race, gender, and socioeconomic status. However, the policy overlooks that Indigenous women also experience higher rates of sexual violence due to their identity as Indigenous, which is different from race. Though race is related to indigeneity, indigeneity is about the relationship to the land. Therefore, the violence

Indigenous women and girls experience is directly related to the dispossession of their land and settler colonial policy as was illustrated in the last chapter. The NAP does state that "historical causes" like the "legacy of colonialism" contribute to the high rates of gender-based violence (Global Affairs Canada, 2022a, 8). However, this language frames settler colonialism as an event of the past rather than an ongoing structure within Canada that is still actively working to eliminate Indigenous peoples. The framing of settler colonialism as a historical phenomenon is reiterated in the statement that Canada wants to "right the wrongs of the past and address current issues and concerns" (9). Though these statements address that settler colonial policies of the past still impact Indigenous communities and specifically Indigenous women, they ignore how Canada's present policies continue the settler colonial elimination project. Mack and Na'puti (2019) argue that "if colonialism is catalogued as primarily 'in the past,' then it is not seriously considered as a structure that must be continuously confronted and challenged in the present" (350). Unlike the NAP, the MMIWG Federal Pathway Progress Report does acknowledge that "past and ongoing colonialism, racism, sexism, and discrimination have caused longstanding harm" to Indigenous women and girls (CIRNAC, 2023). However, this statement is regarding the MMIWG NAP's health and wellness section and does not inform the safety and security section of the report nor Canada's WPS NAP. The NAP's framing of settler colonialism as historical also informs Canada's relationship with Global South states as settler colonialism is understood as an experience Canada has learned from. The policy even states, "Canada's learning experience with the consequences of colonialism and the continued challenges faced by First Nations, Inuit and Metis will help improve Canada's capacity to respond to challenges faced by women and girls abroad" (GAC, 2022a, 9).

In general, Canada's WPS NAP does not consider mass cases of sexual violence against Indigenous women and girls as a threat to security or an effect of the ongoing settler colonial conflict. Although Canada's WPS policy does state that "Canada will continue to work to advance reconciliation and to protect and promote the rights of Indigenous peoples at home" it does not address how the current settler colonial structure promotes violence against Indigenous people and specifically against Indigenous women. By overlooking settler colonialism as a source of insecurity, Canada is not only hypocritical in its feminist foreign policy but also fails to properly act on its commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). It specifically fails in acting to protect Indigenous rights to "freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples… [that] shall not be subjected to any act of genocide or any other act of violence" (UN General Assembly, 2007, 9).

## CIRNAC and ISC Joint Implementation Plan

One of the successes of Canada's NAP is the creation of partnerships with other departments of the government, specifically departments that focus on domestic implementations of the policy. In 2018 Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) joined the national action plan team as supporting partners. The two departments are working together to form Women, Peace, and Security implementation plans specifically for Indigenous communities. The implementation plan acknowledges that Indigenous women and girls experience insecurity and illustrates Canada's goals to address issues impacting Indigenous communities. However, it still overlooks how the present settler-colonial structure creates this insecurity.

One of CIRNAC and ISC's main goals was to include more grassroots Indigenous women's groups on issues that impact Indigenous women and girls. The implementation plan

does state there is ongoing collaboration with Indigenous women's organizations to develop culturally relevant responses to gender-based issues, including sexual violence. These include organizations such as the Native Women's Association of Canada, Les Femmes Michif Otipwmiswak- Women of the Metis Nation, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, and more. Although the implementation plan illustrates CIRNAC and ISC's goals of addressing gender-based issues impacting Indigenous women, there have been few policy changes and implementations that have targeted sexual violence against Indigenous women effectively. For the most part, the implementation plan focuses on collaboration with Indigenous women's organizations but fails to list any policy changes from these consultations and collaborations. The implementation plan also states that one of the main goals for CIRNAC and ISC is to work with other North American states to prevent violence against Indigenous women and girls. This is illustrated through the creation of the Trilateral Working Group on Violence against Indigenous Women and Girls in North America in 2016. However, the progress report states that by 2019 the group has only held three meetings and does not state if any meetings have occurred since that time. CIRNAC and ISC's joint plan acknowledges that the plan is meant to reflect Canada's ongoing commitment to UNDRIP and specifically the rights of Indigenous women stated in the policy (Global Affairs Canada, 2022b). However, the current lack of actual policy implementations and responsibility taken by the state suggests that the inclusion of Indigenous women and girls in Canada NAP, and ISC and CIRNAC's involvement is used more as an ornament to showcase Canada's progress than an indicator of concrete change.

Having ISC and CIRNAC partner to create an implementation plan for Indigenous communities is also problematic because of the distinctions it makes between settlers and Indigenous nations. Haastrup and Hagen (2020) explain:

"On the one hand, by including indigenous women specifically in the NAP, they are

presented as needing separate interventions to which the externalized WPS framework

caters. At the same time, the lived experiences of indigenous women and the broader

context of these challenges are treated as separate to conditions in so-called 'fragile'

contexts" (142).

This suggests that by focusing specifically on Indigenous women and girls, the Canadian

government creates a division between settlers and Indigenous peoples through the kinds of

interventions each group needs. Canada's current policy frameworks create a detrimental

paradox for Indigenous communities where they are Othered from settlers, highlighting how

Indigenous people are particularly vulnerable to gender-based and sexual violence, while also

failing to acknowledge and address how current systems of settler colonialism create this

insecurity. In only highlighting the violence Indigenous communities experience without

acknowledging how the settler state creates this insecurity, Canada removes itself from taking

responsibility for the violence that occurs and instead frames Indigenous peoples and

communities as more susceptible to violence. Thus, framing Indigenous nations as inherently

insecure, similar to how post-colonial states are framed.

# Discussion

In 2000, Canada formed the Group of Friends on Women, Peace and Security as a commitment to implementing UN resolution 1325, protecting women and girls in conflict zones. The group is an informal network reflecting all regional groups of the UN including African states, Asia-Pacific States, Eastern European States, Latin American and Caribbean States, and Western European and other States. This group is meant to advocate for Women, Peace and Security both internally and externally of the UN Security Council by sharing information and pushing for concrete implementations (Tryggestad, 2009). Canada has chaired this group from its formation and strongly advocates implementing Resolution 1325 and subsequent Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) resolutions. Canada's position in this group sets the stage for its position in the international sphere, as a respected champion of women's rights. As illustrated in the last chapter this is not the case when it comes to Indigenous women and girls in Canada.

The first chapter of this thesis used feminist security studies in tandem with Indigenous studies and settler colonial studies to demonstrate how rape as a weapon of war is used within Canada's settler colonial context, specifically focusing on how sexual violence is used to target identity, land, and nation. The use of this strategy as a settler colonial elimination tool reveals how settler colonialism creates insecurity. The second chapter of this thesis analyzed Canada's Women, Peace and Security (WPS) National Action Plan (NAP), revealing how Canada's current security policies do not properly assess or address settler colonialism as a source of insecurity. The chapter highlights how Canada's NAP, instead focuses on insecurity in other states, predominantly those in the Global South as a way to differentiate itself from Global South states. This chapter brings the last two chapters into discussion by arguing that settler

colonialism is overlooked as a source of insecurity by Canada and the United Nations Security Council to maintain Global North hegemony and colonial power structures. In doing this, this chapter illustrates that Global North hegemony is intrinsically tied to settler colonialism. I demonstrate this argument by examining how the narrative of Canadian benevolence and Orientalist ideas play into this dynamic. This chapter will first explore how overlooking settler colonialism as a present source of insecurity plays a role in protecting Canada from being accountable to Indigenous women and girls–not to mention Indigenous nations more generally. It will specifically touch on how narratives of benevolence promote settler colonial violence and maintain a secure and stable global identity for Canada. This chapter will then explore how ignoring settler colonialism in security policy is related to Global North hegemony and the maintenance of orientalist ideas.

## The Facade of Canada's Secure Identity

Securitization is a process. First, a threat has to be perceived by a securitizing actor, such as a state government or political organization, and then the actor works to have the security threat accepted by the public. Once the public accepts it as a security threat it is treated as such (Balzacq, 2005). Settler colonialism is not currently treated as a security threat because it is not accepted as one by the state government–or (most) of the settler population. This is illustrated in Canada's WPS NAP as the language used in the NAP frames Canada as a secure and stable state not experiencing conflict or conflict-related gendered violence. Haastrup and Hagen (2020) have found this framing to be common in Global North states as they explain that NAPs from Global North countries "perpetuate an image wherein the peaceful North …is obliged to 'rescue' the insecure global South" (133). In forming this identity, Global North states, like Canada, maintain their benevolent reputation while preserving global hierarchies.

Benevolence is an important part of Canadian identity and the settler colonial project. Canadian benevolence is a concept that depicts how Canada portrays itself as innocent of systemic racial oppression and violence. It brands Canada as the ideal image of "democracy, multiculturalism, peacekeeping, and tolerance" (Gebhard et. al. 2022, 1). This is a deeply rooted myth that actively works to hide the everyday insecurity Indigenous peoples in Canada experience due to settler colonialism. It is important to note that it is not that insecurity related to Indigenous communities is never acknowledged within Canada, it is that settler colonialism is not deemed a site of insecurity by the state and policymakers. This is partly reflected through which policy documents the Government of Canada will include an acknowledgement of the ongoing presence of settler colonialism and its detrimental effects on Indigenous communities. As revealed in the last chapter, Canada's progress report on the Federal Pathway of the MMIWG NAP does acknowledge how ongoing colonialism harms Indigenous women and girls, but this statement was only made in the health and wellness section. Settler colonialism as an ongoing structure creating insecurity is not mentioned in the safety and security section of the progress report. Thus, maintaining a distance between ideas of Canadian stability and security and settler colonialism and the insecurity it creates. This is in part because the Canadian settler state relies on violence against Indigenous people to secure its jurisdiction and maintain stability. Ignoring the fragility settler colonialism creates within the state is thus also a method of maintaining the stability of the settler state and settler ways of life. Indigenous scholar Audra Simpson (2016) shares this perspective as they state that Canada requires the death and disappearance of Indigenous peoples, specifically Indigenous women, to "secure its sovereignty" because Indigenous peoples inherently challenge the state's legitimacy. A benevolent framework thus protects Canada from taking responsibility for the strategic use of sexual violence against

Indigenous women and girls, allowing it to maintain a system that authorizes settler jurisdiction. As Bourgeois (2018) writes "While violence against Indigenous peoples is central to settler colonial domination, so too is the denial and erasure of this violence" (68).

Furthermore, within Canadian security discourses, Indigenous peoples have often been framed as creating insecurity and challenging settler ways of life. The association of Indigenous peoples as enemy others is very prevalent within Canada. As Barker (2018) explains, "Indigenous peoples are always already positioned as terrorists, or as inherent threats to the interests of the nation and its proper, rights-bearing citizens" (as cited in Starblanket and Hunt, 2020, 83). This is showcased in how the Canadian state handles Indigenous opposition to settler colonial land claims. For example, the Land Back movement started when Indigenous people from the Wet'suwet'en territory protested the construction of the Coastal GasLink Pipeline on their traditional lands (Crosby, 2021). This was not just a protest against pipelines but against the jurisdiction that the Canadian government claimed in the area. The protests resulted in the RCMP and the Canadian government labelling Indigenous land protectors as national security threats (Crosby, 2021). This is just one case of many as Starblanket and Hunt (2020) explain "Canadian society was built upon Indigenous dispossession and legal/political subordination, but it also has to be continually maintained and rendered 'secure' from new threats to its legitimacy" (84). The Canadian settler state relies on framing Indigenous communities as instigators of insecurity to maintain the state's stability. As Pratt (2013) states "practices and understandings of security and insecurity depend upon the identification of boundaries between "us" and "them" and particular constructions of Self/Other" (772). This distinction between self and other often depends on hierarchical differences in gender and race. Thus, Canadian security discourses often frame settlers as secure and needing to protect themselves and their legitimacy from enemy

others— Indigenous people. This security framework is not conducive to understanding how settler colonialism creates insecurity because it relies on the idea that Indigenous peoples are the security threat.

Within Canada, narratives of benevolence are also used to position racism as historical, ignoring the present reality of racial oppression within Canadian borders. This narrative dehumanizes Indigenous people in Canada while subsequently justifying violence and the taking of land by forming a reality where a crime never occurred (Bourgeois, 2018). It characterizes white settlers as innocent even when they are enacting violence against Indigenous people or benefiting from structures that disallow Indigenous calls for justice. Razack (2020) explains that "Indigenous invisibility as racial targets" reproduces a narrative where Indigenous peoples are dead or dying and that the land is free for settlers to take. This suggests that the narrative of Canadian benevolence not only allows for violence against Indigenous people to go unseen but also works as an elimination strategy that grounds itself in the disappearance of Indigenous communities and cultures. By Ignoring settler colonialism as a source of insecurity, the UN Security Council and Canada maintain a post-colonial reality where colonial violence and aggression are things of the past. This re-establishes settler colonial rule in Canada that relies on the narrative that Canada has always belonged to settlers and was never taken or colonized. Furthermore, rape as a weapon of war is a war crime and acknowledging this on a global stage would require Canada to take responsibility for the current settler colonial structures this tactic is used to maintain. In doing this, Canada would not only have to break away from the facade that it is secure but also the lie that the land has always belonged to settlers.

## Settler Colonialism and the Maintenance of Global North Hegemony

What becomes obvious in the above discussion is that security frameworks are hierarchal. However, dismissing settler colonialism as a source of insecurity within Canada does not only subjugate Indigenous nations but also maintains Global North hegemony. Through this current framing Canada maintains its standing as superior to Global South states where conflict occurs in a way that is more readily accepted as insecurity by the international community. This suggests that Canada's refusal to acknowledge the strategic use of sexual violence against Indigenous women and has to do in part with protecting Canada's international image. Canada's Women, Peace and Security Ambassador O'Neil even states, "Contributing to reconciliation domestically is also key to [Canada's] credibility globally" (As cited in Midzain-Gobin and Dunton, 2021). In ignoring settler colonial violence and focusing on the conflict and insecurity in post-colonial Global South states, Canada and other Global North States perpetuate the idea that Global North states are inherently more peaceful and stable. In contrast, Global South states are inherently unpeaceful and violent. These ideas re-emphasize global hierarchies and help justify intervention from Global North states (Pratt, 2013).

This suggests that narratives of Canadian benevolence are largely tied to global narratives of East-West dichotomy, otherwise known as Orientalism. Post-colonial scholar Edward Said (1979) explained that there are key differences in how East and West are understood in Global discourse. The West, or Global North, is often understood to be rational, liberal, and modern whereas the East, or Global South, is violent, anti-liberal, and inferior. This perspective is illustrated in the narratives around Islam and the Middle East, being equivalent to violence and irrationality (Jacoby 2023). Said (1979) explains that Orientalism builds on and expands existing inequalities between the West and the East through discourse and narratives. Narratives then

formulate and maintain identities; homogenizing both Western and Eastern identities to ensure

the maintenance of a hierarchy that benefits the West and the white race (Said 1979). Narratives

play an important role in creating an identity for Global North states based on security, stability,

and superiority over Global South states, the inverse of the Global South identity. Thus,

Orientalism is less about creating the identity of the Global South and more about maintaining

the identity and status of the Global North.

  In continuing the narratives of Canadian benevolence Canada maintains its identity as

being different from and superior to Global South states and non-white people. This occurs even

when Canada and white settlers participate in violence similar to Global South states and non-

white people. As illustrated in the second chapter, the concept of rape as a weapon of war is

often analyzed in the Global South context, even though numerous Indigenous studies scholars

have researched how sexual violence continues to be used strategically as a colonial tool. Canada

further creates a distinction between itself and Global South states through the NAP as the plan

points out how Canada is meant to support other, more fragile, states in meeting the standard

Canada holds for women's rights and safety. The NAP speaks of other states, specifically non-

white and non-European states, needing Canada to rescue its women. Laura Shepherd (2021)

explains that "the recognition of 'First-World feminists' as legitimate and credible experts on

relations internationally" is a common part of international relations and one that reinforces

oppressive orientalist global dynamics (13). Canadian benevolence is thus not just limited to

differentiating white settlers from Indigenous peoples in Canada but from people of colour all

over the world. In creating a narrative of benevolence, the dominant white society in Canada can

perpetuate violence against Indigenous peoples while also maintaining its superior non-violent

status over Black and Brown people abroad. Thobani (2007) explains "The excluded Other

becomes the nation's 'double'" (20), suggesting that the Indigenous Other is used to create settler identity as Indigenous peoples act as an oppositional force to base settler identity off while also being a threat to the settler state and its authority. Thus, Indigenous peoples as the Other help create settler identity within Canada while post-colonial Global South states act as an Other to maintain Canada's higher status.

The maintenance of Global North hegemony is especially prevalent in the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) dismissal of settler colonialism as a source of insecurity. According to the UN Digital Library and the Repertoire of Security Council Practice, the treatment of Indigenous people in Canada, including women and girls, has never been discussed in a Security Council meeting. There has been no discussion of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls or about Indigenous women in general. On the other hand, in the first six months of 2023, the Security Council has already had 19 meetings that either mention or are entirely focused on the Syrian conflict. Syria, in particular, is a great point of comparison to Canada because it is a post-colonial, Global South state currently experiencing a civil war that is disproportionately affecting women and girls and specifically the Indigenous Yazidi population (Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, 2023). Three of the nineteen UNSC meetings mention women and girls' experiences and treatment in the Syrian conflict. This does not even include the numerous meetings on Syrian refugees. What is prevalent in this analysis, is that the UNSC often focuses on internal conflicts in Global South states but ignores internal conflicts in Global North states. It is also interesting that postcolonial Global South states are readily accepted as insecure and fragile by the UNSC, but that same fragility is not acknowledged in settler colonial Global North states.

These frameworks portray colonialism as a positive structure and, arguably, European and Global North influence as essential to bringing stability and security. This is especially prevalent in the argument Haastrup and Hagen (2020) make: that in specifically focusing on sexual and gender-based violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls in Canada, the WPS policy Others Indigenous women from the rest of the state and frames Indigenous nations as fragile in an otherwise un-fragile state. Colonialism and intervention from white settlers thus become framed as a necessity to save Indigenous nations incapable of maintaining their own stability and security. Security studies scholar, Nicola Pratt (2013) shares this perspective as they explain that the WPS policy re-emphasizes distinctions between Global North states and post-colonial Global South states by characterizing White men and women from the Global North as saviors of Brown women. The WPS policy is thus more "a reconfiguration of gender, race, and sexuality rather than the dismantling of the binaries and hierarchies underpinning imperialism [and colonialism]" (Pratt, 2013, 774). Pratt uses the diagram below to illustrate the clear distinctions in how white women and women of color are characterized and how white men and men of colour are characterized. Specifically, Pratt's diagram illustrates how feminist security policies, like the WPS policy, often frame Brown women as victims of Brown men that need to be saved by white women and men from Global North states.
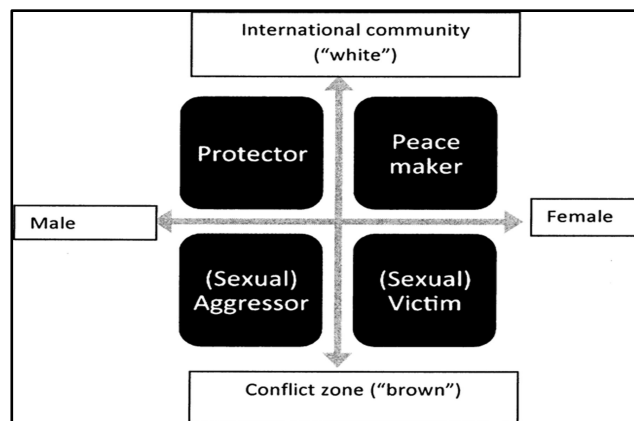


(Pratt, 2013, 775)

Pratt solely focuses on how the WPS policy frames the Global South and how these characterizations promote imperialism. However, Pratt's assessment can also be applied to Canada's NAP and Indigenous nations in Canada. Due to the NAP's highlighting of sexual violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls without acknowledging settler colonialism as the main cause behind these attacks Canada shifts blame from the state to Indigenous communities. This framing allows Canada to claim that it is actively participating in reconciliation efforts, framing the settler state and specifically settlers as saviors, while not acknowledging or addressing the role settler colonialism plays in creating this insecurity. This frames Indigenous communities as the outliers in an otherwise secure state. Thus, Indigenous communities are portrayed as insecure and Indigenous women and girls as victims.

Comparing Indigenous peoples in Global North countries to Global South states is not uncommon. Many scholars have identified the transnational nature of colonialism and how there is a connection between settler colonialism, post-colonialism, and current imperial projects. For example, Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2012) describe how settler colonial strategies used in countries like Canada and the U.S. were successfully used in imperial projects worldwide. In Vietnam and Afghanistan, U.S. military personnel even used terms like "Indian Country" illustrating how they viewed the people of these countries as similar to Indigenous people in settler colonial states (Tuck and Yang 2012, 31). In doing this white-settler identity is differentiated from everyone not belonging to that group.

# Conclusion

In summary, this thesis has investigated the questions: To what extent does Canada's approach to national security address settler colonialism? And how does this security framework reproduce power dynamics that privilege Global North states? I demonstrated that insecurity exists within Canada through the use of sexual violence against Indigenous women and girls as a strategy of war and colonialism. I also illustrated that this insecurity is overlooked in Canada's Women, Peace and Security (WPS) National Action Plan (NAP) to protect Canada's jurisdiction over colonized land and its status as a secure and stable state.

This thesis first explored how rape as a weapon of war is used within the Canadian settler colonial context. The chapter uses feminist security studies in tandem with settler colonial studies and Indigenous studies to highlight how the theories need to be used together to properly reflect the issue of sexual violence against Indigenous women and girls. I demonstrated how identity, land, and nation are targeted when Indigenous women are sexually assaulted illustrating how sexual violence against Indigenous women acts as a tactic of war.

This thesis then utilizes a policy analysis, illustrating that the UN Women, Peace and Security Agenda as well as Canada's WPS NAP ignore how settler colonialism currently plays an essential role in promoting sexual violence against Indigenous women and girls. Although the NAP does acknowledge that Indigenous women and girls experience higher rates of gendered violence, including sexual violence, due to their identity as Indigenous and the socioeconomic factors related to this identity, the NAP fails to properly assess the issue. Canada's NAP along with Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) joint implementation plan uses their acknowledgement of the cases of

sexual violence against Indigenous women and girls as an ornament to showcase Canada's commitment to reconciliation and women's rights rather than creating tangible policy changes that address how Canada's settler colonial structure creates this insecurity.

In conclusion, by not acknowledging and addressing the insecurity settler colonialism creates, Canada and the United Nations Security Council maintain settler colonial structures and Global North hegemony. This is because framing Canada as a secure and stable state not only ignores the ongoing violence Indigenous communities experience but also sustains Canada's ability to establish itself as superior to conflict-ridden Global South states. Thus, Canadian benevolence narratives are interdependent to Orientalist narratives. This suggests that settler-colonial and post-colonial power dynamics reproduce each other.

## Utility in a Security Studies Approach

It is important to acknowledge that securitization theory has negative connotations regarding marginalized groups. As securitization requires a securitizing actor, who is often an elite, security frameworks often maintain hierarchical structures (Balzacq, 2015). Colonialism is also inherently hierarchical and thus acts as a "structuring factor in securitization" (Gomes and Marques, 2021, 85). This is prevalent in Canada through the way Indigenous people are characterized as enemy others and how peaceful Indigenous protests have been securitized. However, security frameworks are not inherently negative or oppressive. Gomes and Marques (2021) argue that because securitization is often used to maintain colonial structures, security theory has the capability to assess colonial power dynamics. This is showcased in the second chapter of this thesis where I reveal the overlap in Indigenous studies and feminist security studies' understanding of the body. Specifically, both theories acknowledge how the body relates to more than itself and encompasses identity, nation, and land.

Securitization also challenges maintained structures. As explained earlier, threats are only treated as threats once they go through the process of securitization (Balzacq, 2005). Gomes and Marques (2021) second this by stating "A securitized problem is the intersubjective construction of an existential threat" (80). Securitizing an issue brings it out of the realm of normal politics and into extraordinary politics. According to Roe (2012), normal politics in mainstream security schools like the Copenhagen school "refers to the notion of 'routine procedures'" (251). Security studies theorists like Claudia Aradau (2004) believe that due to securitization's ability to push politics into the realm of the extraordinary, it is inherently negative and diminishes the stability of maintained systems in liberal democracies (as cited in Roe, 2012). However, in a settler colonial state like Canada, normal politics include maintaining settler colonial structures that oppress Indigenous nations. If normal politics are oppressive then pushing for extraordinary politics creates an opportunity to challenge oppressive structures.

Securitization theory also helps analyze how rhetoric around security is understood. For example, analyzing Canada's WPS NAP and United Nations WPS policy helps reveal what is considered a security threat and how power is maintained not only through securitization but also through ignoring insecurity. This begs the question: What if instead of securitizing Indigenous peoples, the Canadian state securitizes the structure that oppresses them and treats settler colonialism as a threat?

WPS policy is also an important tool in exploring this dynamic. Utilizing WPS policy helps bring a global framework to violence against Indigenous women and girls. In doing this we can understand how different forms of colonialism are interconnected and even interdependent. As mentioned earlier, political theorists Tuck and Yang (2012) have explored the transnational nature of colonialism specifically how settler colonialism has impacted other colonial and

imperial projects. However, I believe that through using the international framework of feminist security studies we can start to explore how the specific distinctions between East and West maintain settler colonialism by concealing settler colonial violence and insecurity. A main theme in third and fourth chapter is that Canada's support for Women, Peace and Security and the state's NAP is used as a way to maintain its international image as a champion of women's rights. As mentioned earlier WPS Ambassador O'Neil connected Canada's reconciliation efforts to Canada's global image (Midzain-Gobin and Dunton, 2021). I agree that Canada's experience with colonial violence could serve as a resource for effective NAPs on WPS in other states, including other settler colonial states. However, for this to successfully happen Canada will first need to create tangible policy to dismantle settler colonial insecurity.

## Limitations and Possible Further Research

There are a few key limitations of this project that are important to acknowledge. Firstly, this thesis uses the language of feminist security studies and specifically rape as a weapon of war. This is a very Western framework in which most of the literature is written by non-Indigenous authors through a non-Indigenous worldview. The thesis also uses United Nations terminology and policy, both of which can be limiting to Indigenous women's voices and seen as working within a colonial system that historically and presently subjugates Indigenous nations. Secondly, this thesis relies on UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions and meetings to illustrate how settler colonialism is ignored as a source of insecurity within international relations. However, by only focusing on the UNSC, the thesis does not comprehensively account for how other international security organizations understand settler colonialism. This leaves space for exploring how organizations, like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and others understand and create policies regarding settler colonialism.

Lastly, this project relies heavily on analyzing Canada's 2017-2022 Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan. At the time of writing this thesis, the 2017-2022 NAP was the most recent NAP. However, as of March 2024, the Government of Canada has released the new National Action Plan. This creates an opportunity to assess and analyze Canada's new NAP through a feminist security studies, Indigenous studies and settler colonial studies lens to examine whether Canada's framing of settler colonialism has changed in the seven years since the release of the last NAP in 2017.

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