Ploughshares

Hidden Harms: Human (In)security in Outer Space

Visualization

By Jessica West

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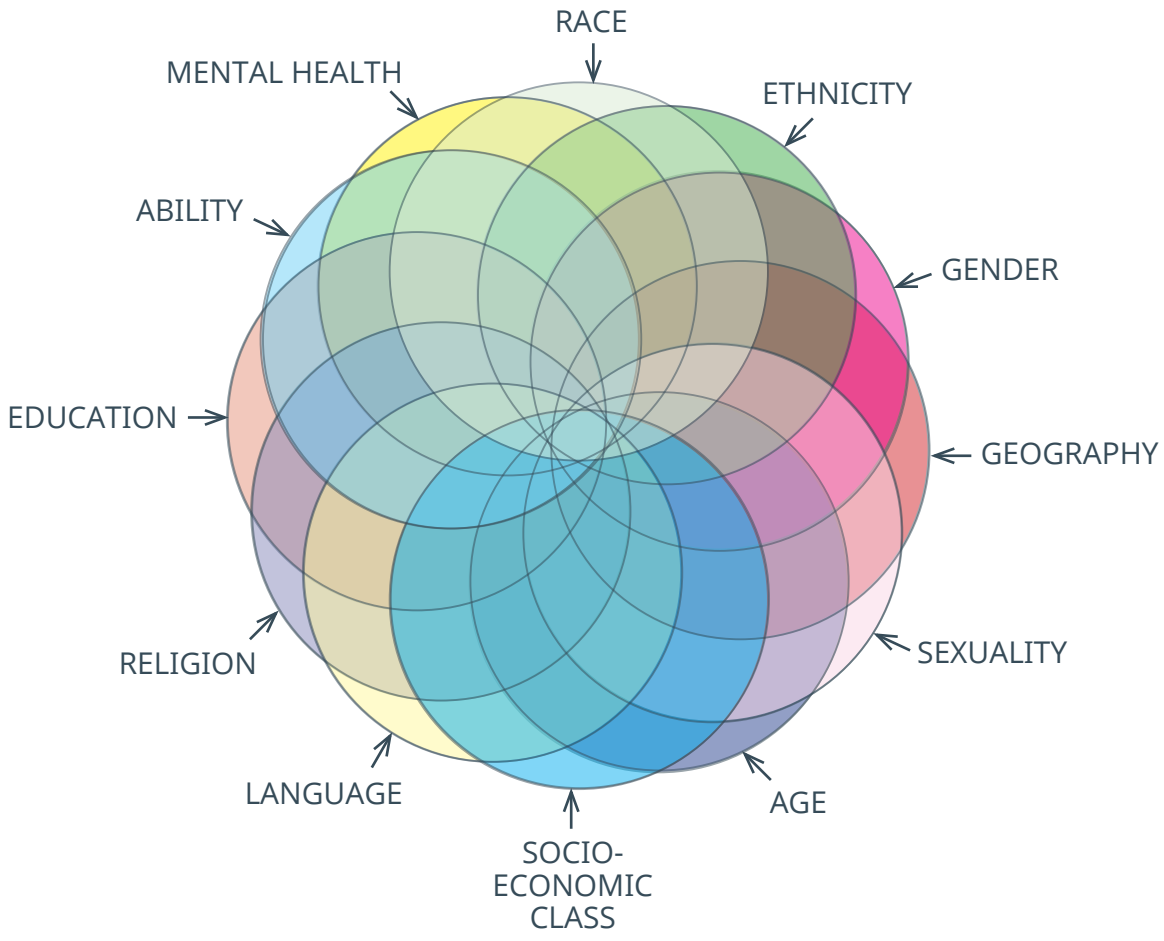
1.

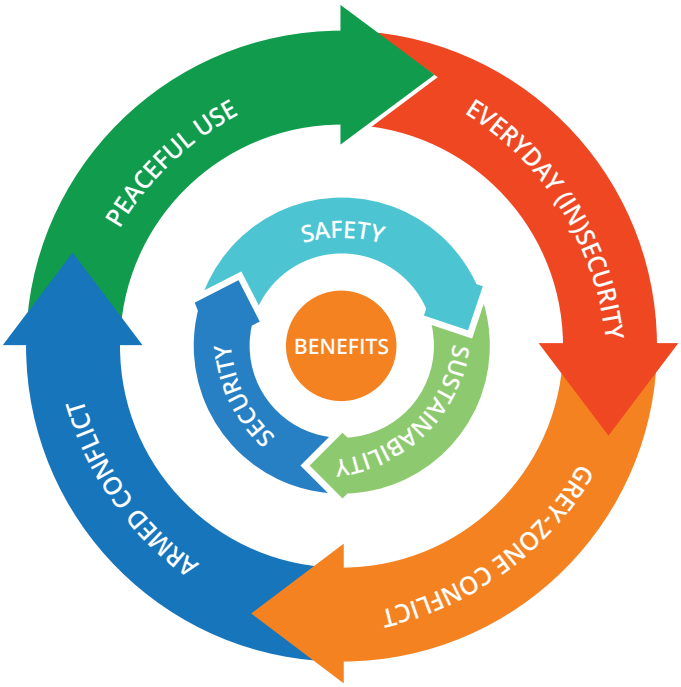
Outer space is a human environment. Although relatively few humans are located in outer space, it is deeply connected to human well-being through capabilities linked to essential services and infrastructure, science, spirituality, and culture. But space also causes human harm.



2. **Intersectionality** recognizes that human experiences related to outer space are not uniform. Sources of power and inequality that shape these experiences are layered, unequal, and intersect with one another.

3.

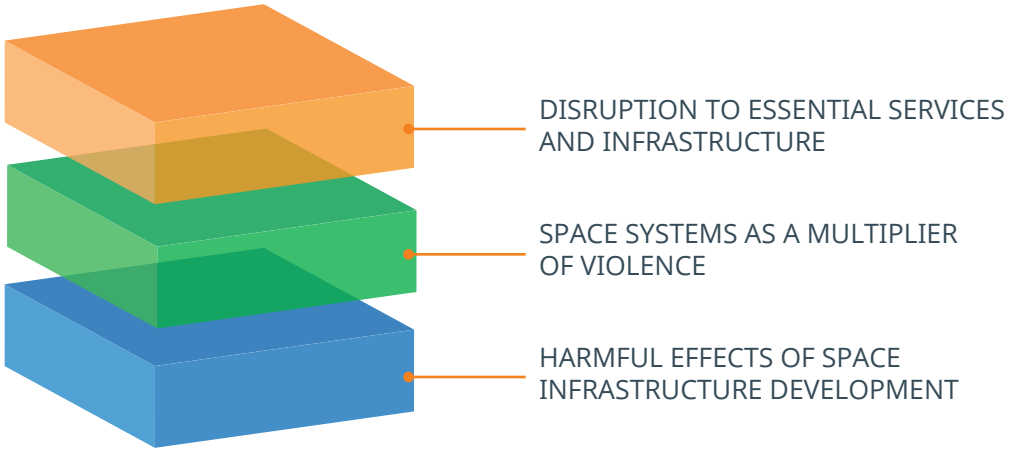
For **space security**, this means that the benefits and harms associated with outer space exist along a continuum and are not experienced the same way by everyone. Sometimes benefits for some can be experienced as harms by others.



4.

When thinking about the human implications of insecurity related to outer space, we must recognize that there are multiple layers of vulnerability.

Triple vulnerability:

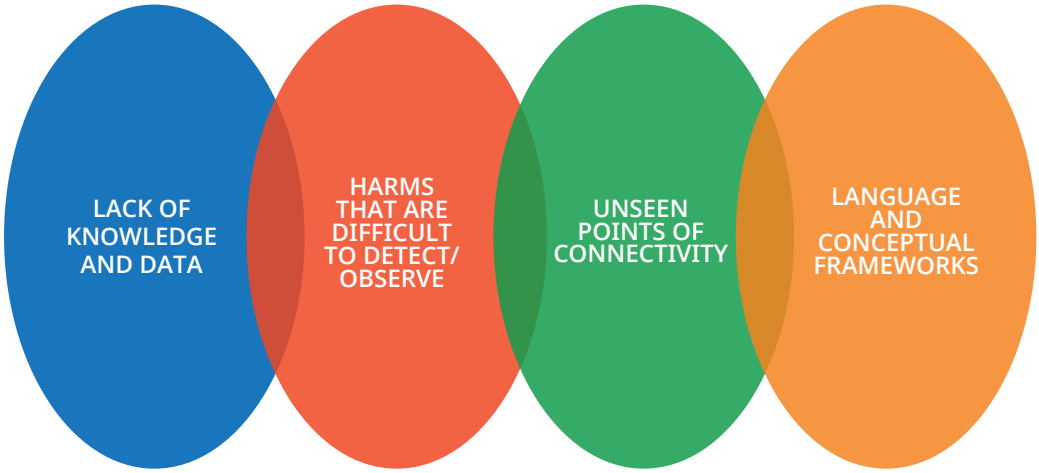


Harms can stem from actions taken against space systems, environmental effects, interactions with other technologies, or space systems themselves.

Vulnerability paradox: Those with less access to space may be more vulnerable to disruptions of those services and may have less protection from harmful uses of space systems.

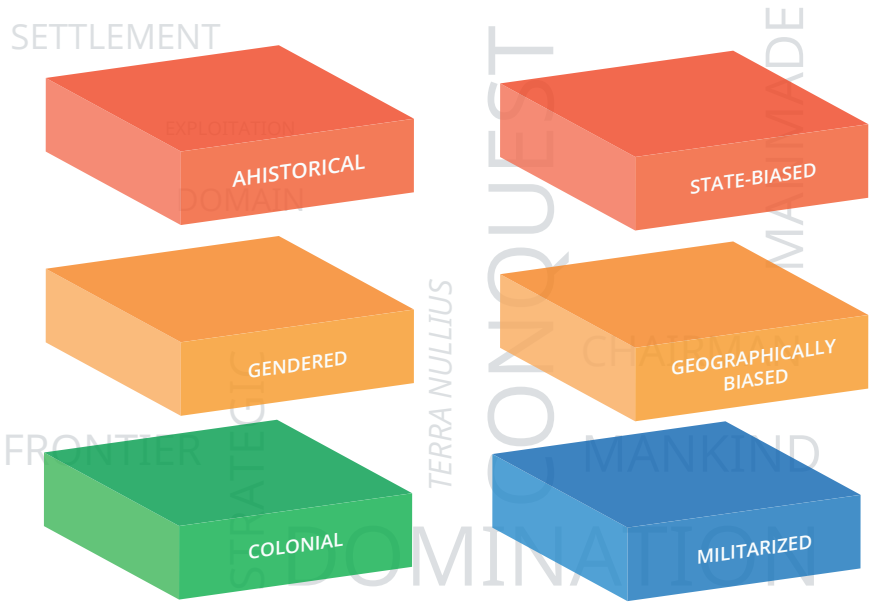
5.

Harms associated with outer space are often shrouded and amplified by layers of invisibility.



6.

Language and concepts matter: Many concepts associated with space activities and approaches to security in outer space perpetuate sources of harm because they are:



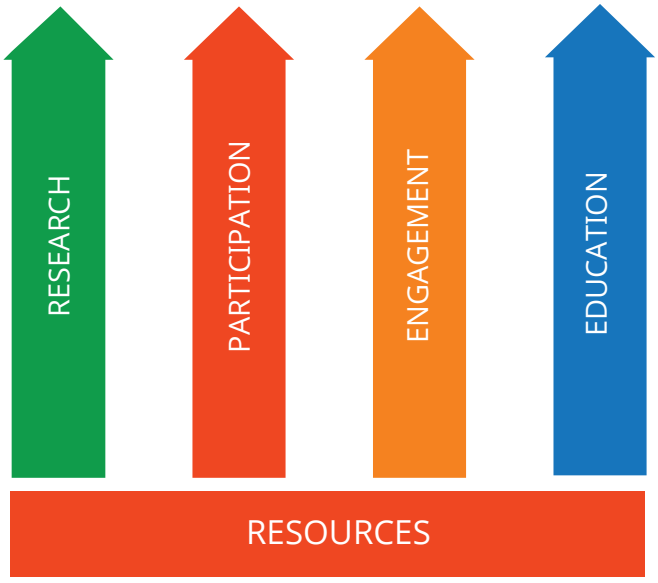
7. **But we can shift our thinking about space security.** Approaches and concepts from other fields can help to correct limitations and reduce harms that stem from dominant discourses, while providing alternative modes of peace, security, and governance.

Underpinning all of these concepts is an understanding of the connectedness of different groups of people across geographic, developmental, and other social identities, with each other and with the space environment.

8. We can also change how we approach space security, by valuing connectedness and mutual care.

9. **And we can change how we practise space security** by emphasizing meaningful engagement. Beyond opening the door to participation, this requires a global commitment to:

10. Finally, **a commitment to more inclusive approaches to space security requires resources** to support and sustain the engines of change.



Learn more at:

ploughshares.ca/reports/hidden-harms-human-in-security-in-outer-space-consultation-report.

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Project Ploughshares is a Canadian peace research institute with a focus on disarmament efforts and international security specifically related to the arms trade; emerging military and security technologies; nuclear weapons; the protection of civilians; outer space; and the intersection of climate, peace, and security.

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