

A Gender Perspective within Armies: Missions and Internal Conformation

Marcela Donadio / RESDAL

1 Approach. Introduction

The peace process in Colombia is one of the most important in recent decades and may constitute a set of experiences that is able to aid other countries in conflict. Moreover, reform of the security sector, and within this the question of military forces, is one of the central themes on the post-conflict agenda. In this context, since the signing of the peace agreements the Colombian Army has embarked on a process of internal reflection that will lead to the redefinition of its missions within a post-conflict environment, including the protection and security functions that are designed for this new context.

It is precisely from the very beginning of these reform processes that a gender perspective needs to be included, and importantly incorporating its two dimensions: within armies, and with respect to national and international society. In the conformation of the military institution we will refer especially to one aspect of gender, namely the incorporation of women into military ranks. For its part, the external dimension alludes to national and international missions, leading to the operations of a military force that relates increasingly closely with the local population.

Thus, in order for a gender perspective to be incorporated transversally into the evaluation of military structures and missions, the question of gender has been selected as one of the three central themes to form part of the analysis of a project directed by RESDAL, with financial support from the Canadian Global Peace and Security Fund. The project brought together the experiences of distinct cases from Latin America, especially in relation to missions around public security and risk management in cases of natural and manmade disasters, as well as a transversal gender perspective.

2 Definitions, Myths and Realities

We understand **security** as a situation in which states have the capacity to deter and/or overcome threats to their vital interests, which includes individuals being able to develop their lives in peace and liberty. And we understand

the concept of **gender** according to the definition most commonly used by the United Nations, "Gender refers to the socially constructed roles as ascribed to women and men, as opposed to biological and physical characteristics. Gender roles vary according to socio-economic, political and cultural contexts, and are affected by other factors, including age, race, class and ethnicity."¹

A range of works within the fields of anthropology, sociology and security² have been devoted to the analysis of what lies behind this definition. That is, that gender and sex are not equivalent terms:

"In general terms, gender **refers to the social role assigned to and exercised by women and men as a result of historically assumed social and cultural constructions, and not as a product of natural biological differences**. Gender thus accounts for the social, cultural, economic, political, psychological, and demographic differences built around the biological fact constituted by sex.

"To make a distinction between these concepts, **sex** refers to the biological characteristics (anatomical, physiological, hormonal, etc.) of people. It is a category that distinguishes between males and females, and is universal, something with which one is born. Sex is a natural fact.

"Gender, on the other hand, is a cultural and social fact that corresponds to the characteristics attributed to each sex by society and culture. This category distinguishes between feminine and masculine; it is contextual and historical, and is something that is learnt.

"Gender determines what is expected of a woman or man, but does not simply refer to women and men, but instead the relationship between them, and to the manner in which this relationship is established socially: the feminine and masculine are formed through a historical and culturally determined interaction. That is, it is a characteristic of each society, culture and epoch, a relationship that is furthermore hierarchical and unequal.

"In this way, gender shapes the place that people occupy in society and their relationship with power, given that although other categories such as social class, race or ethnicity impact on this, gender is transversal to these."³

¹ United Nations (2002). *Women, Peace and Security, Study submitted by the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1325*. New York: United Nations, p.12.

² See the manual elaborated by ECLAC: Benavente, María Cristina; Villalobos, Pamela and Donadio, Marcela (2016). *Manual de formación regional para la implementación de la resolución 1325 (2000) del Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas relativa a las mujeres, la paz y la seguridad*. Santiago, Chile: ECLAC. Pre-deployment peacekeeping training modules developed by the United Nations begin with this distinction between gender and sex.

³ Benavente (2016), p12.

The **gender perspective** is a concept that has been developed since the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (Fourth United Nations Conference on Women). It was from there that the United Nations began to advocate, among agencies and Member States, the adoption of *gender mainstreaming* or *transversalization* of the gender perspective: "Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality."⁴

The fact that gender and sex tend to be seen as synonymous terms has worked against the adoption of a gender perspective within policies and institutions. This is particularly the case in military and police institutions, where perceived pressures to adhere to social and political parameters have led to the inclusion of women in their ranks, yet such an inclusion has not necessarily been accompanied or motivated by the adoption of this basic distinction between gender and sex.

The military institution was historically conceived, from the birth of professional armies, as a masculine institution. Membership of the institution was defined by sex. It was men who possessed the characteristics considered necessary for war, while the role of women consisted, at most, of auxiliary activities. Such gender roles were established on the basis of what was expected of each of the sexes. The World Wars of the twentieth century, especially the second, began to change this image; changes to warfare also played a role. It is the case that during the world wars women began to assume a more prominent role in military activities, in the services. But it was in society where the most interesting changes were beginning to take place. The roles assigned to each gender, which had established that it was for men to give their lives fighting and for women to take care of life - children – and of property, changed (above all since civilians became part of the battlefield). Over the course of prolonged conflicts, the absence of men and the need for a war machine combined to produce the greatest change: the massive incorporation of women within the labour market. And with this came a change in gender roles, which, as stated at the beginning, are contextual, historical, learnt, and correspond "to the characteristics that society and culture attribute to each sex."

⁴ ECOSOC (1997). *Report of the Economic and Social Council for 1997*. New York: United Nations, A/52/3, 18th September 1997, p. 28.

Let us look at the case of the military institution, an organized body defined by Huntington according to the following: "the modern officer corps is a professional body and the modern military officer a professional man. (...) A profession is a peculiar type of functional group with highly specialized characteristics. (...) Professionalism distinguishes the military officer of today from the warriors of previous ages."⁵ This body has a certain professional mentality: "People who act in the same way over a long period of time tend to develop distinctive habits and persistent thinking. Their exceptional relationship with the world gives them a unique perspective and leads them to rationalize their behavior and their role. (...) The military mentality, in this sense, consists of the values, attitudes and perspectives which inhere in the performance of the professional military function and which are deductible from the nature of that function."⁶

Other important studies on the subject (Morris Janowitz and Charles Moskos) incorporated more dynamic elements related to society and to changes in military function, which help to explain the relevance of a gender perspective. Janowitz, a contemporary of Huntington, also observes how "the professional soldier is unique because he is an expert in war-making and in the organized use of violence."; "This primary goal of the military establishment creates its special environment and influences its decision-making process. Social background, military authority and career experiences condition the perspectives of its leaders. The style of life of the military community and a sense of military honor serve to perpetuate professional distinctiveness."⁷

Janowitz also incorporates the distinction between different functions⁸ and types of authority, introducing the concept of "civilization", alluding to the impact of technological developments on the profession that blur the distinction between the civil and military worlds. On this basis, decision-making within the military institution is managed through a delicate balance between under-

⁵ Huntington, Samuel (1957). *The Soldier and the State, the theory and politics of civil-military relations*. New York: Vintage Books, p.7.

⁶ Huntington adds: "The military ethic emphasized the permanence, irrationality, weakness, and evil in human nature. It stresses the supremacy of society over the individual and the importance of order, hierarchy, and division of function. It stresses the continuity and value of history. It accepts the nation state as the highest form of political organization and recognizes the continuing likelihood of wars among nation states. It emphasizes the importance of power in international relations and warns of the dangers to state security. It holds that the security of the state depends upon the creation and maintenance of strong military forces. It urges the limitation of state action to the direct interests of the state, the restriction of extensive commitments, and the undesirability of bellicose or adventurous policies. It holds that war is the instrument of politics, that the military are the servants of the statesman, and that civilian control is essential to military professionalism. It exalts obedience as the highest virtue of military men. The military ethic is thus pessimistic, collectivist, historically inclined, power-oriented, nationalistic, militaristic, pacifist, and instrumentalist in its view of the military profession. It is, in brief, realistic and conservative." Huntington Samuel (1957), p. 79.

⁷ Janowitz, Morris (1960). *The Professional Soldier*. New York: Free Press, p.15.

⁸ "The history of the modern military establishment can be described as a struggle between heroic leaders, who embody traditionalism and glory, and military 'managers', who are concerned with the scientific and rational conduct of war (...) Neither heroic leaders nor military managers perform as military engineers or technologists (...) the military establishment depends on maintaining a proper balance between the three functions: heroic leaders, military managers and military technologists". Janowitz (1960), p.21.

standing the trend of moving closer towards the civilian world while maintaining the so-called “fighting spirit”. Years later, Moskos develops the concept of “civilization”, or “civilianization”, the process through which the soldier draws closer to the society of which he is part: he is a soldier but is also part of the civil world. On the basis of what is known as the institutional-occupational model,⁹ he basically explains how the occupational model more typical of civilian life – that in which the individual is also motivated by personal reasons and economic incentives – is increasingly added to the institutional model (based on traditional values and norms that promote group cohesion). Changes to the international context, globalization and technological changes add elements of postmodernity to the manner in which the military *raison d'être* is perceived,¹⁰ and therefore the requirements of the soldier of today. The following can be cited among these:

- The growing structural and cultural penetration between the military and civil spheres.
- The reduction in differences between units and between combat and assistance roles.
- Changes to missions, particularly the tendency towards missions that are not specifically (or traditionally) military in nature.
- The employment of forces by entities beyond the state, such as international organizations.

Gender issues are linked to **changes to the traditional military institution**. Firstly, because the distinction between the characteristics of each sex deemed necessary for the military is no longer so clear; this has furthermore become the subject of increasing debate in scientific terms (for example, in relation to physical capacity). And, secondly, because it is the same gender roles that are in question. It is now not only a question of whether or not to incorporate women into the heart of armies - the body of professional officers born from military academies - but also one of the missions that the soldier should fulfill, and therefore of what society expects from them, of the image that society envisions when thinking of a soldier. It is not simply by chance that most of the communications issued by armies in reference to the presence of women in their ranks are photographs or vid-

⁹ Moskos, Charles C. (1977). “From Institution to Occupation: Trends in Military Organization.” *Armed Forces & Society*. Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, Vol. 4, pp.41-50, November 1977.

¹⁰ Moskos Charles C., Williams John Allen, Segal David, Eds. (2000). *The Postmodern Military. Armed Forces after the Cold War*. New York: Oxford University Press.

eos showing the presence of women, that they play a combat role, and that they reach elevated roles within the military hierarchy (even when they are professionals incorporated into the military following previous civilian careers, a reference that is usually omitted). It may not be conscious, but in reality the issuance of such communications responds to the fact that such communicators perceive current gender roles within society to indicate the need for women to form an active part of the institution, and of there being a need to respond accordingly.

The need for reform processes to include a gender perspective was stated at the beginning. To this we now add that it is unavoidable; the longer it takes, the greater the subsequent effort required to adapt to a context that has already changed. This perspective - this lens through which we look - implies two aforementioned dimensions:

- Armies and the incorporation of women: This can be achieved just because it is expected to be that way (it is, ultimately, an army **within** a certain society). This is the aspect that has generally been considered up until now, and the point at which the majority of Latin American armies find themselves. It can also respond to something as relevant and necessary as what was mentioned previously: the need to have the **capacity** to fulfil the missions befitting of the institution at present, and the issue of how both sexes are incorporated into the institution in accordance with these missions. The critical question is thus how we look inwards at ourselves, in relation to a society of which we are part, and that expects certain things from us. What do we need to achieve this?
- The Army **and** national and international society: current missions involve increasingly close links with the local population, and are increasingly distant from a force that fights in specific battlefields. These are missions - such as in public security or disaster risk management - that are defined as non-traditional, but that in practice occupy a large part of the work conducted by Latin American armies. And this trend is only increasing. Such missions assume that military men and women are able to observe and to act in a way that takes into account the gendered realities of their mission, the natural differentiation that exists among the beneficiaries of their operation. The relevant question to be asked is how we look at those we serve, and how we best respond to those different needs.

A transversal gender perspective is thus one that covers all aspects of the military institution on the basis of these two major questions: what do we need in the institution, and what does society need?

When we speak of **incorporation into the armed forces**, a final definition is necessary for the purposes of this work. We assume that two large bodies are found within the military institution: one **administrative/supportive** (those who develop a career in the civilian field and then join the armed forces as professionals of those careers: doctors, lawyers, engineers, etc.), and the other **line or command**: those who choose the military career as their profession and therefore from the beginning receive their training in military academies, be they commissioned or non-commissioned officers.

The name given to the body of incorporated civil professionals varies according to the country considered: *asimilados* / assimilated (El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua), *de servicios* / of services (Chile), *especialistas* / specialists (Ecuador), *incorporados* / incorporated (Paraguay), *professional* / professional (Argentina and Brazil) and *administrativos* / administrative (Colombia).

For the command corps, the denominations used are: *armas* / career (Argentina, Colombia and Ecuador), *militar de carrera* / military careerist (Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala), *militar de profesión* / military professional (Mexico), *de línea* / command (Chile), and *permanentes* / permanent (Nicaragua).

3 International Tendencies

A. The Rights of Women and how this is reflected in their incorporation within the Armed Forces

The rights of women as part of the body of international human rights law have gained their greatest recognition and apogee since the mid-twentieth century. After the guarantee of political rights achieved through the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (which came into force in 1954), an intense movement was dedicated to addressing the issue of discrimination. It took 12 years to get from the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (Resolution 2263, AGXXII, of November 7th, 1967) to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (**CEDAW**), which has been the cornerstone of the process over recent decades.¹¹ This Convention treats the issue as a basic human right and advances on a larger premise: that the maximum participation of women in all spheres, and on equal terms with

¹¹ United Nations (1979). *Resolution AG 34/180*, 8th December 1979. Entered into force: September 3rd 1981.

men, is indispensable to a country's development and to the cause of peace. Through it, States Parties commit themselves to take all measures to eliminate discrimination against women in political and public life, and to guarantee women the right to "hold public office and perform all public functions in all governmental levels" on equal terms with men (Article 7, part b). Twenty years later, in 1999, the Optional Protocol to CEDAW created a Committee to which persons or organizations that consider their rights to have been violated by a State Party may appeal.¹²

It was in this context, and under the auspices of the United Nations, that the World Conference on Women process began. The first Conference was celebrated in 1975, and its corollary a year later: the creation of UNIFEM as a UN system agency (known today as UN Women). These form just a part of what has been an important evolution within the United Nations, not only towards guaranteeing the rights of women, but also the consideration of these rights in the context of armed conflicts, and how the exercise of such rights can contribute to international peace and security. The Fourth World Conference was another milestone: held in Beijing in 1995, it shifted the focus of attention to the concept of gender, recognizing the need to re-evaluate the entire structure of society and all relations between men and women in order to fully potentiate the role of women. It established the concept of **transversalization** of the gender perspective (gender mainstreaming) as a core strategy. This concept was later reflected in the proposals of the system, notably in the aforementioned request by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1997 for a gender perspective to be adopted across all policies and programs of the United Nations system. The Conference also identified the **women and armed conflicts** binomial as one of the twelve spheres of action to be worked on through the **Beijing Platform for Action**.

CEDAW Recommendation N° 30

As part of the Convention process, recommendations are periodically sanctioned to the States Parties to it. **General Recommendation no. 30 (2013) on Women in Conflict Prevention, Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations** is especially relevant to defence and subsidiary tasks, such as public security and

¹² United Nations (1999). *Resolution AG 54/4*, October 6th 1999.

disaster risk management.¹³ With the objective of providing states with guidelines for the development of policies and legislation, their scope includes the application of CEDAW to:

- The prevention of conflict, international and non-international armed conflicts, situations of foreign and other forms of occupation, as well as the post-conflict phase.
- Other situations that, even when they are not classified as armed conflicts according to international humanitarian law, result in potential violations of women's rights. These include internal disturbances, protracted and low-intensity civil strife, political conflicts, ethnic and communal violence, the repression of mass uprisings, the war against terrorism and organized crime, and states of emergency.

The topics covered include, among others, security sector reform, sexual violence in conflict, the question of refugees, human trafficking, access to justice, and electoral reforms. With regard to security sector reform, it recommends that states:

- a) Develop and implement disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs in coordination and within the framework of reforms to the security sector.
- b) Undertake reforms to the security sector that take into account and respond to questions around gender and that result in the creation of representative institutions within the security sector that effectively address the distinct experiences and security priorities of women, and that collaborate with women and women's organizations.
- c) Ensure that reform of the security sector is subject to inclusive supervisory and accountability mechanisms that include sanctions, including investigating the background of former combatants; create protocols and specialized units to investigate violations based on gender; and strengthen expertise on gender issues and on the role of women in supervising the security sector.
- d) Guarantee the participation of women in conditions of equality in all stages of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, from the negotiation of peace agreements and the creation of national institutions to the design and implementation of programs.

¹³ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2013). *General recommendation no. 30 on women in the conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict* CEDAW/C/GC/30, November 1st 2013.

- e) Ensure that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs take specific account of women and girls associated with armed groups as beneficiaries, and that barriers impeding their participation under conditions of equality are addressed; and ensure that they are provided with psychosocial and other support services.
- f) Ensure that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes specifically address the concrete needs of women to support disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, taking into account questions surrounding age and gender, including the specific concerns of young mothers and their children, without orienting the programs too much towards them or stigmatizing them more.¹⁴

B. The Women, Peace and Security Framework

In 2000, the then UN Secretary General convened a high-level group to conduct an in-depth review of United Nations activities related to peace and security and to formulate specific, concrete and practical recommendations to help the United Nations carry out these activities in the future. Known as the *Brahimi* Report, it determined that in order for the United Nations to carry out its peacekeeping and peacebuilding tasks, it was absolutely necessary for Member States to support the Secretary General politically, to provide more financial resources, and to incorporate significant institutional changes at the Department of Peace Operations.¹⁵

In the same year, the Security Council sanctioned a resolution that currently forms the fundamental basis of the women, peace and security framework: **Resolution 1325** of October 31st, 2000.¹⁶ It was the product of a multi-year process during which numerous countries advocated the inclusion of the issue on the international peacekeeping agenda.

In particular, the Resolution called for:

- Increased representation of women across all institutional decision-making levels and within national, regional and international mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts.
- Increased voluntary financial, technical and logistical support for training activities designed to create awareness of gender issues.

¹⁴ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2013). *General recommendation no. 30 on women in the conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict* CEDAW/C/GC/30, November 1st 2013, paragraph 69.

¹⁵ United Nations (2000). *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. A/55/305*. New York, August 21st 2000. Chapter I: The need for change.

¹⁶ United Nations (2000). *Resolution 1325 (2000)*. S/RES/1325. New York, October 31st 2000.

- The incorporation into peace negotiations of issues such as the special needs of women and girls during repatriation, resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration and reconstruction post conflict; measures to support local women's peace initiatives and to involve women in all mechanisms for implementing peace agreements; and measures that guarantee their protection and respect for their human rights, especially in electoral, police, and judicial matters.

Furthermore, it called on the Secretary General to:

- Appoint more female special representatives and special envoys to carry out good offices missions on their behalf.
- Broaden the role and contribution of women in field operations, especially among military observers, civilian police and personnel dedicated to human rights and humanitarian tasks.
- Ensure that operations in the field include a gender component.
- Provide Member States with guidelines and training materials on the subject, and to urge them to apply these materials prior to the deployment of personnel.
- Report periodically to the Council on progress regarding the inclusion of a gender perspective in peace missions (reports that have since been issued annually).

Resolution 1325 has since been complemented by a series of subsequent resolutions:

- **Resolution 1820** (2008) condemns sexual violence as a weapon of war, categorizes it as a war crime (a classification already protected by the Rome Statute), and requires parties to armed conflict to take immediate measures to protect civilians. It also covers the issue of troop training and the application of military discipline codes.
- **Resolution 1888** (2009) calls on the Secretary General to appoint a Special Representative to lead on the issue of sexual violence in conflict and to incorporate the position of protection advisers, urges Member States to institute reforms that ensure the penalization of this crime and the provision of appropriate support to victims, and establishes the inclusion within mandates of specific provisions for the protection of women and children from sexual violence in armed conflicts.

- **Resolution 1889** (2009), as a continuation of the previous resolution, reiterates the call for increased participation of women in all aspects of peacebuilding, urges the Secretary General to elaborate a strategy to increase the number of women appointed on his behalf, and to take measures to ensure this number also increases within political, peacebuilding and peacekeeping missions.
- **Resolution 1960** (2010) reaffirms that the employment of sexual violence as a weapon of war can prolong and significantly aggravate situations of armed conflict and constitutes an impediment to the restoration of international peace and security, and recognizes the work of gender advisors in the field.
- **Resolution 2103** (2013) makes specific reference to military and police contingents. It recognizes their role in the prevention of sexual violence and requests that all pre-deployment and on-mission training include the issue of sexual violence. It also requests that gender and women protection advisors continue to be assigned to missions, and recognizes the role played by civil society organizations.
- **Resolution 2122** (2013) proposes that more attention be paid to the leadership and participation of women in conflict resolution and highlights the challenge provided by a lack of information and analysis on the effects of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peacebuilding, and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution.
- **Resolution 2242** (2015), issued on the fifteenth anniversary of SCR 1325, urges Member States to evaluate their strategies and their allocation of resources for the implementation of the agenda on women, peace and security, reiterates its call to ensure greater representation of women at all decision-making levels, and encourages the significant inclusion of women in peace talks. It incorporates the issue of radicalization into the women, peace and security agenda.

Resolution 1325 and related resolutions had a strong impact at the international level, especially with regard to peace missions. They led to the creation of the posts of Gender Advisors as well as women's protection advisers, the implementation of guidelines for military and police work in missions,¹⁷ an increase in the work of UN Women on peace and security, the inclusion of permanent debates on Resolution 1325 at the Security Council, and the general issue is one of the items on today's agenda.

¹⁷ United Nations (2010). *Integrating a Gender Perspective into the Work of the United Nations Military in Peacekeeping Operations*. New York: DPKO/DFS, March 2010.

4 Regional Tendencies

A. Normative and Historical Context

Advances in relation to the gender perspective that have occurred in the field of defence are linked to the general context found in Latin American societies, in which gender issues, and in particular the role of women, have occupied an important position on the agenda. The region has undergone changes to its environment – especially those linked to democratization following the military dictatorships - that have been reflected in the increased incorporation of women into political, economic, cultural and social life. One of the most important instruments in this process was the 1995 Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, "**Belém do Pará Convention**", which was approved by the General Assembly of the OAS (Organization of American States).¹⁸ This Convention, which marks a milestone on the matter within the Inter-American system, frames violence against women as a violation of their basic human rights and proposes mechanisms for protection that states must establish as part of their obligations.

The ranking of regional countries in terms of what is referred to as gender equality and equity can be seen, for example, in the following table: The ranking presents the positions in descending order, beginning from number 1 with the country with the smallest gender gap (Iceland in 2017). Nicaragua is ranked first among Latin American countries.

Table 1
Global Gender Gap, by selected cases, 2017

6 – Nicaragua
34 – Argentina
36 – Colombia
42 – Ecuador
62 – El Salvador
63 – Chile
81 – Mexico
90 – Brazil
110 – Guatemala

Source: *Global Gender Gap Index 2017. The index – elaborated by the World Economic Forum – is based on the following categories: economic participation and opportunities, political empowerment, educational performance, and health and life expectancy.*

¹⁸ Organization of the American States (1994). *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belém do Pará Convention)*. June 9th 1994.

In the defence and security sector, Security Council Resolution 1325 also has parallels in the experiences of Member States from the Latin American region - although in comparison to European or North American countries the process took a few more years to develop as forcefully. Three aspects stand out in particular:

- Ownership of women, peace and security was assumed by military peace operations training centers. Presently, not only are the basic modules provided by the United Nations utilized, but lectures and courses dedicated to the subject have also been generated.
- Reflection on the issue as well as measures aimed at increasing the incorporation of female personnel into the armed forces.
- The elaboration of **National Action Plans** based on Resolution 1325, which seek to coordinate and make effective the work of governments with respect to its implementation nationally. As of 2017, Argentina, Brazil, Chile (two), Guatemala and Paraguay have elaborated these types of plans at the national level.

Civil society played a key role in these three processes, with the Latin American experience standing out in relation to other large contributing regions. RESDAL has led the discussion on Resolution 1325 within training centers and ministries of defence since 2007, producing the first - and at this point only - regional investigation on the incorporation of women into the armed forces, prompting the consideration of national action plans and also supporting their formulation in a number of countries.¹⁹

At the regional level, developments within the defence sector have been framed within the context of broader advances on the issue of gender in each country, which have themselves been expressed through legislation and the creation of institutions. With regard to institutions, the process of forming ministries, secretariats or institutes of women began in the 1980s; they are young institutions - in some cases dependent on the office of the president - that are developing their own capacities. Their impact in the area of defence and security remains scarce across the region.

¹⁹ Furthermore, RESDAL was the first organization to visit three peace missions and to conduct interviews with military contingents from the different regions of the world. The gender program has mainly been supported through the cooperation of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Canada and Norway. The dissemination of these processes in Latin America led to this organization being one of the two civil society organizations required by the United Nations to participate in the preparation and dissemination of the Gender Military Guidelines (the aforementioned gender guidelines for military work in missions) and in the preparation of training modules based on them. A complete analysis on the incorporation of women into the Armies can be found in Donadio Marcela and Mazzotta Cecilia (2009). *Women in Armed and Police Institutions: Resolution 1325 and Peace Operations in Latin America*. Buenos Aires: RESDAL. Available at <http://www.resdal.org/genero-y-paz/women-in-the-armed-and-police-forces.pdf>. Also, Donadio Marcela and Rial Juan (2012). *Engendering Peacekeeping: The Cases of Haiti and Democratic Republic of Congo. A Gender Security Analysis from a Latin American Perspective*. Buenos Aires: RESDAL. Available at http://www.resdal.org/genero-y-paz/Engendering_peacekeeping.pdf.

Other gender offices have also been created within the different ministries or secretariats; in the case of ministries of defence and the armed forces, **the process of creating specific gender units or directorates began towards the end of the first decade of the 21st century**, and has reached its peak in recent years. Argentina provided the first case, with the creation of the Directorate of Gender Policies within the Ministry of Defence in 2007. Until now it is also the office of this type to have had the greatest impact on the military sphere.

The creation of gender units or offices within the scope of ministries of defence or of the armed forces has also been driven in large part by their active participation in peace operations, which is furthermore expressed in the creation of military training centers that have incorporated questions around gender into their work, as previously mentioned. One such example is CREOMPAZ, the Regional Training Command for Peace Operations for Central American countries, whose headquarters is in Guatemala. It habitually carries out courses on gender involving experts from academia and civil society, and which go beyond the obligatory modules provided by the UN.

Table 2
Principle institutions linked to gender, defence and security in different Latin American countries

Ministries and Official Bodies

Argentina
Directorate of Gender Policies – National Directorate of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law – Ministry of Defence
General Directorate for Peacekeeping Cooperation– Ministry of Defence
Directorate of International Organizations – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Special Representative for Women's Issues– Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Directorate of Women - Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Gender Section – Human Rights Directorate – Ministry of Security
INAM (National Institute of Women – Office of the President).
CAECOPAZ (Argentine Center for Joint Peace Operations Training)
CENCAOPAZ (Center for Peace Operations Training – Argentine Gendarmerie)
INADI (National Counter Discrimination Institute)
Office of Women – Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation
Office of Domestic Violence - Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation
Ministry of Justice and Human Rights
Brazil
CCOPAB (Brazilian Center for Peace Operations Training)
Department of International Organizations – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Armed Forces Gender Commission – Ministry of Defence
SPM (Secretariat of Special Policies for Women – Office of the President)
SENASP (National Secretariat of Public Security – Ministry of Justice).
Special Commissioners for Assistance to Women, Civil Police
Chile
Counsel on Gender, Undersecretariat of the Armed Forces, Ministry of Defence
Directorate of International and Human Security – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Directorate of Multilateral Policies - Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Directorate of Human Rights - Ministry of Foreign Affairs
AGCI (International Cooperation Agency – Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

ANEPE (National Academy of Political and Strategic Studies)
 Department of International Relations – SERNAM (National Women's Service)
 Department of Peace Operations – National Defence Staff
 CECOPAC (Joint Peace Operations Centre)

Colombia

Office of Gender Equality – **National Army**
 Presidential Counsel on Gender Equality
 Human Rights – International Policy and Affairs – Ministry of National Defence
 Foreign Policy – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 Community women's councils
 Women's Ombudsman

Ecuador

Gender Unit – Directorate of Human Rights, Gender and International Humanitarian Law – **Ministry of National Defence**
 Commission for Transition to the Council of Women and Gender Equality
 United Nations Directorate – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 National Directorate of Gender of the Ministry of Government (DINAGE)
 National Directorate of Women of the Ombudsman's Office
 Office for the Defence of Women's Rights, National Police (ODMU)
 UEMPE (Unit of the Peace Operations School of Ecuador).
 SEMPLADES (National Secretariat of Planning and Development)

El Salvador

Gender Unit – **Ministry of Defence**
 ISDEMU (Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women)
 Gender Commission – National Civil Police
 Peace Operations School
 Council of SICA Ministers for Women (applies also to Nicaragua, Guatemala and Honduras)

Guatemala

Department of Gender – **Ministry of National Defence**
 Gender Commission – **National Defence Staff**
 Directorate of Peace Operations of the Chief of Staff - **Ministry of National Defence**
 CREOMPAZ (Regional Centre for Peace Operations Training).
 Community Violence Prevention Unit – Vice Ministry of Community Assistance – Ministry of Government
 Undersecretary of Multilateral Police for the United Nations – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 SEPREM (Presidential Secretariat for Women)
 Technical Secretariat of the National Security Council
 COAPREVI (National Coordinator for the prevention of domestic violence and violence against women)
 DEMI (Ombudsman for Indigenous Women) – Office of the President of the Republic
 Gender Equality Section – National Civil Police
 Gender Office – Police Academy
 SEGEPLAN (General Secretariat of Planning and Programming, Office of the President).
 Secretariat of Peace
 Prosecutor's Office for Women's Affairs - Ministry of Public Prosecution
 National Women's Forum (in the framework of the Peace Accords).
 National Women's Office (ONAM)- Ministry of Work and Social Provisions

Mexico

Observatory for Equality between Women and Men in the Mexican Army and Air Force. Human Rights Directorate. **National Defence Secretariat**
 Unit for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. Secretariat of the Navy.
 National Women's Institute

Unit for Substantive Gender Equality. Federal Police.
 Gender Equality Policy Unit. Secretariat of Foreign Affairs
 Gender Equality Unit. Office of the Attorney General of the Republic
 (National Program for Equality of Opportunities between Women and Men 2013-2018 promotes the creation of gender equality units across public administration)

Nicaragua

Ministry for Women
 Gender Commission. Supreme Court of Justice
 Special Prosecutor for Women
 Technical Secretariat of Women. Judiciary.

Legislative advances were mainly initiated in the 1990s, reflecting the process of democratization and the response of political representatives to the issue of equality and equal opportunities in all sectors of national affairs. In the last decade, however, there has been a trend towards the consideration of topics that were hitherto invisible: **domestic and gender violence**, and **femicide**. The timeline showing legislation in the region displays an increasing openness to addressing the issue of gender violence as something specific, beyond general categorizations in criminal codes or the incorporation of criminal precepts to them.

Table 3
 Principle laws covering gender issues, by selected cases

ARGENTINA		
Date	Number	Subject
22/11/2017	Law 27412	Law for gender parity in the lists of candidates to be national legislator
30/12/2015	Law 27234	Prevention and eradication of gender violence
05/08/2013	Law 26873	Breastfeeding. Public awareness and promotion
25/06/2013	Law 26862	Comprehensive access to medical-assistance procedures and techniques for medically assisted reproduction
26/12/2012	Law 26842	On prevention and punishment regarding human trafficking and assistance to victims
23/05/2012	Law 26743	Gender identity
21/07/2010	Law 26618	Civil matrimony
11/03/2009	Law 26485	Comprehensive protection to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women in environments where they develop their interpersonal relationships
21/10/2005	Law 26061	Comprehensive protection of the rights of girls, boys and adolescents
27/05/1985	Law 23179	Approval of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
13/08/1992	Decree 1426/92	Creation of the National Council for Women
03/12/1991	Law 24012	Female quota
BRAZIL		
Date	Number	Subject
08/11/2017	Law 13505	Provides for the right of women in situations of domestic and family violence.
07/08/2006	Law 11340	Maria da Penha Law
CHILE		
Date	Number	Subject
27/04/2015	Law 20840	Replaces the binomial electoral system with one of an inclusive and proportional nature and strengthens the representativeness of the national congress
08/03/2015	Law 20820	Creates the Ministry for Women and Gender Equality, and modifies legal norms indicated therein.
27/10/2014	Law 20786	Modifies the working day, breaks and composition of the remuneration of workers in private residences, and prohibits the requirement to wear uniforms in public places

24/07/2012	Law 20609	Establishes measures against discrimination
17/05/2012	Law 20595	Creates the Ethical Family Income for families in extreme poverty and the employment subsidy for women
17/10/2011	Law 20545	Modifies protection laws covering maternity and incorporates parental postnatal leave
13/09/2011	Law 20533	Enables midwives to prescribe contraceptives
08/04/2011	Law 20507	Categorizes the crime of trafficking of children and adults and establishes regulations for its prevention and more effective criminal prosecution
18/12/2010	Law 20480	Modifies the Penal Code and the Law on domestic violence.
28/01/2010	Law 20418	Establishes standards on information, orientation and welfare benefits in the relation to fertility regulation
23/11/2009	Law 20399	Grants the right of access to nursing rooms for workers
19/06/2009	Law 20348	Safeguards the right to equal pay between women and men
17/03/2008	Law 20255	Establishes pension reform and grants women a bonus for liveborn children
12/02/2007	Law 20166	Extends the right of working mothers to breastfeed their children even when there is no nursing room
07/10/2005	Law 20066	On domestic violence
18/03/2005	Law 20005	Typifies and sanctions sexual harassment
09/11/1998	Law 19591	Modifies the labor code in relation to maternity protect
ECUADOR		
Date	Number	Subject
11/12/1995	Law 103	Against violence against women and the family
EL SALVADOR		
Date	Number	Subject
04/01/2011	Decree 520	Special Comprehensive Law on women's right to a life free from violence
08/04/2011	Decree 645	Law on equality, equity and the eradication of discrimination against women
25/11/2011	Decree 873	Government ethics law
16/04/2009	Decree 839	Law on the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents
15/08/2003	Decree 627	Law creating the solidarity fund for families in microenterprise
20/12/1996	Decree 902	Law against domestic violence (last reform 2004)
01/03/1996	Decree 644	Law of the Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women (last reform 2002)
GUATEMALA		
Date	Number	Subject
24/10/1996	Decree 07-1996	Law to prevent, punish and eradicate domestic violence
02/05/2008	Decree 22-2008	Against femicide and other forms of violence against women
20/03/2009	Decree 09-2009	Law against sexual violence, exploitation and human trafficking
MEXICO		
Date	Number	Subject
01/02/2017	O F G 22-06-2017 (last reform)	General Law on women's right to a life free from violence
02/08/2006	O F G 24-03-2016 (last reform)	General Law for equality between men and women
12/01/2001	O F G 04-06-2015 (last reform)	Law of the National Women's Institute
NICARAGUA		
Date	Number	Subject
20/04/2015	Law 870	Family Code
02/04/2015	Law 896	Law against human trafficking
29/03/2014	Law 648	Law of rights and opportunities

The close connection, mentioned at the beginning of this section, between a country's normative and institutional provisions and the gender policies adopted by a military institution can be observed throughout the region. For example, in the case of Mexico, the application of a gender perspective forms part of a National Program for Equal Opportunities and a National Development Plan, which spill into the National Defence Secretariat's 2014-2018 Human Rights Program, whose remit includes: "Training female and male members of the Mexican Army and Air Force in the field of Human Rights, International Humanitarian Law, Right to Equality and Non-Discrimination and Gender Equality."²⁰ And, of said Program, the elaboration of a code of conduct for public servants that directly addresses the issue of sexual harassment and abuse, and that places gender equality as one of the eleven values required of every public servant.²¹

B. The incorporation of Women into Armies

In Latin America the military institution (and armies in particular, since they were the original forces in all countries in the region) was also conceived as a male institution, as in other regions. It was professionalized in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century through the creation of officer academies, compulsory military service, and organic laws of armed forces. This responded to the fact that the development of states (including the organization of internal spaces, but also border disputes) also supposed the construction of a professionalized military instrument that would serve as a tool for controlling violence. With experiences taken from Europe (most countries summoned French and German missions to advise them), this trend spread across the region towards the end of the nineteenth century, bringing about a new organizational tendency. This led to the rise of national armies in the form they are currently known, introducing the notion of military professionalism - with its regulations, organization and discipline - to the disorganized military bodies that had been born out of the revolutions.

Over time the professionalization of the military produced a complex institution that was organized and homogenous and had access to all territorial spaces; meanwhile the state that had created it suffered a progressive deterioration of authority and legitimacy in many countries of the region. There was only a small distance to travel from this point to reach the idea that the military institution operate almost as a replacement of the state, and even of the government. Political processes and interventions over the course of the twentieth century

²⁰ SEDENA (2014). *Programa de Derechos Humanos de la Secretaría de Defensa Nacional*. Mexico City: SEDENA. P. 11.

²¹ SEDENA (2017). *Código de Conducta de las y los Servidores Públicos de la Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional*. Mexico City: SEDENA, June 29th 2017.

delayed a natural process of "civilianization" of the military institution, in accordance with changes at the international level and in the forms of war. But with the extension of democratization processes from the 1980s onwards, and the transformation of hypotheses of conflict into mechanisms of cooperation, there was a need to redefine missions, and therefore also the desired characteristics of a military professional in the world of today.

The military function, as part of public functions, was fully achieved through CEDAW. However, in certain parts of the world arguments over the incorporation of women into military institutions have managed to keep the issue on the margins. This is principally true of those that refer to the specificity of the military profession (with the preferred argument being around physical differences) as an explanation for the masculinity that still surrounds the military institution. In the case of Latin American countries, it is difficult to assert that the process of fully incorporating women into the armed forces has been related to a clear awareness of the pressure imposed by this Convention. On the contrary, in most cases it was the product of democratization and the need to draw closer to society, and even of initiatives originating from within armed institutions themselves. Likewise, it was closely related to the aforementioned advancement of gender policies in other areas of social, political and economic life, from which the defence sector did not want to be left aside at the risk of marginalizing itself from the wave of democratization. In cases such as that of Argentina, and even while there may have been no intention to do so, the gender policy pursued by the Ministry of Defence since the creation of the Human Rights Directorate contributed to the extension of full citizenship to the armed forces (this point will be expanded on later).

It is possible to distinguish between three distinct phases when we speak of the incorporation of women into Latin American armies:

- Participation in the wars of independence: numerous women served in auxiliary functions, such as in administration and health. This included, for example, nurses providing medical assistance, which has provided a popular image from the time; many have been considered heroines in their respective national histories.
- Incorporation into the service corps: women were not part of the development of professional armies, which occurred especially through military academies and the training of troops through compulsory military service. In Colombia, for example, it was only in 1976 that approval was given for the incorporation of women into the administrative body.

Incorporation into military officer academies: these academies have passed through different stages linked to different post-independence national histories. But their origins are discernible at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, and are linked to the manner in which Latin American countries went about shaping their permanent armies into the form we know them today.

Entry of Women into the Academy

Table 4
Army Academies and Incorporation of Women, according to Country

	Year in which the current stage of the Academy was initiated	
Argentina National Military College	1904	1997
Brazil Agulhas Negras Military Academy	1944 (1913 in another site)	2012
Chile Military School	1887	1995
Colombia General José María Córdova Superior Military School	1907	2008
Ecuador Eloy Alfaro Cadet Military School	1899	1999
Guatemala Polytechnic School	1920	1997
El Salvador Captain General Gerardo Barrios Military School	1927	2000
México Heroic Military College	1915	2007

Sources: Websites of the aforementioned academies. For the purposes of comparison, the cut-off date is taken to be the cut-off date that the academies recognize as the beginning of the institution in its current form, be it in structure or in curricula; the majority of them have a history dating back to the 19th century under other names or legal frameworks. Given the particular history of Nicaragua and the creation of the Sandinista Army, this case is not included in the table.

Women began to be admitted into the academies as career officers post-1990 in all cases. This was a moment – 1991 - in which international security trends changed markedly. The world had passed into the post-Cold War period, while the Gulf War marked a conflict that showed, in the eyes of the world community, changes to warfare. Thus the changing nature of female participation in Latin American armies coincides with the introduction of new paradigms with regard to the **missions** of such armies and with **processes of democratization and increased openness** that were taking place in different national contexts. This was further deepened with the inclusion of **international peace operations** as one of the possible routes for action, providing a different way of approaching military activities. In the case of non-commissioned officers (NCOs), the entrance of women occurred earlier.

Table 5
Admission of Women into Military Academies according to year and selected country

		Command Corps*			
NCOs	Year of admission into armed institutes through technical schools	Country	Land Force	Air Force	Naval Force
		Argentina	1996	1980	1980
		Brazil	2012/ 17**	2002	2012
		Chile	1998	2009	2009
		Ecuador	1975	2008	1965
		El Salvador		2016	
		Guatemala		1997	
		Mexico	2007	2007	1995
		Nicaragua		1994	

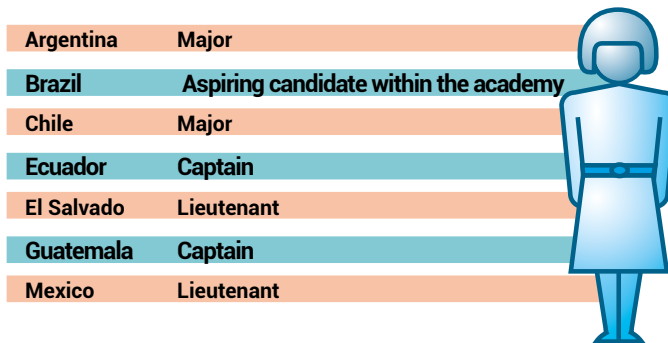
Commissioned officers	Year of admission into armed institutes through professional training schools	Country	Land Force	Air Force	Naval Force
		Argentina	1997	2001	2002
		Brazil	2012/ 172	1996	2012
		Chile	1995	2000	2007
		Ecuador	1999	2007	2001
		El Salvador		2000	
		Guatemala		1997	
		Mexico	2007	2007	2010
		Nicaragua		1993	

* "Command corps" refers to those who enter military schools directly, in the absence of previous civilian professional experience.

** In August 2012, reforms were made to the laws that establish the admission requirements for officer courses in the Army and Navy, enabling the entry of women (Nº. 12.705 - 08/08/2012 and No. 12.704 - 08/08/2012). In the case of the Army, a period of 5 years was established to put in place the means necessary for the incorporation of women.

The incorporation of women into the career officer corps has been, as can be seen, a recent occurrence. One of the reasons given, for example, as to why more women are not sent on peace missions, or even as to why the percentage of women in armies remains low, is the question of **time**: given that the incorporation of women has occurred only recently, and given the laws governing promotions within the military career structure, female graduates of military officer training academies are yet to reach ranks superior to that of Major.²²

Figure 1
Highest ranks reached by women among command officers as of 2017



²² The different military career paths in force in each country can be found in the "Countries" section of RESDAL's *Comparative Atlas of Defence in Latin America and Caribbean*, http://www.resdal.org/ing/assets/atlas_2016_ing_completo.pdf.

Beyond the matter of the timing of women's admission into officer career structures, women have participation in armies for several decades. Those that entered as part of the professional corps prior to these recent processes have in practice played an **important role as protagonists** of gender issues within the institution. The experiences of various countries shows that women who are already integrated into the professional army corps, in an auxiliary role, and who have had to face a range of obstacles over the course of their careers, have been great allies to those actors pushing for an improved gender perspective (be they politicians, military figures, or members of civil society).

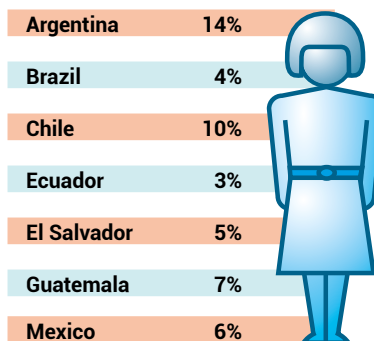
Table 6
Year in which women were admitted into the army's professional corps**, selected countries

NCOs		Commissioned officers	
Country	Land Force	Country	Land Force
Argentina	1981	Argentina	1981
Brazil	2001	Brazil	1992
Chile	1974	Chile	1974
Ecuador	1958	Ecuador	1956
El Salvador	1971	El Salvador	1985
Guatemala	1967	Guatemala	1967
Mexico	1938	Mexico	1938
Nicaragua	1979	Nicaragua	1979

** "Professional corps" refers to those military personnel that are trained or incorporated into the forces in order to provide technical and / or professional auxiliary services.

Table 7
Percentage of Women in the Army, 2016.

Sources: Ministries or Secretariats of Defence (Argentina, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico) and the armies of Brazil and Ecuador. Data from 2016. In the case of Ecuador, the figure refers to the percentage of women in all military forces. The Secretariat of National Defence of Mexico has announced the development of plans to bring the figure up to 11% over the course of the next decade.



Planning the incorporation of women The participation of women in the military field is no longer an issue in question; but the form and scope of this participation is. And the natural resistance of any institution to change, expressed routinely and in latent form, manifests itself. Recognition or communication of a gender perspective within military institutions is today a politically correct manifestation. Restrictions and limitations exist that work against attempts to move beyond this. These appear in quotas that are not fixed in policy but are in practice, an absence of appropriate regulations regarding discrimination over issues such as maternity rights, or restrictions over access to certain units or specialities. The concept of "glass ceilings" has been coined

in feminist literature precisely to refer to the limits that in practice are placed on women's careers, preventing their advancement beyond a certain predetermined point, despite the fact that in theory they should be able to access equal opportunities.²³ Such aspects affecting the incorporation process include:

- **The reform of regulations governing incorporation:** in the military field, which is governed by laws defining the military career, the issue of incorporation does not necessarily depend on the will of chiefs of staff. The opening up of military institutions requires a more in-depth consideration of the issue by political agents of the state, within both the executive and legislature (and also a greater practical understanding of the fact that equality between men and women is a universal right of which the military function is not excluded). In the experiences of the Latin American cases considered here, an active role exists for ministries of defence in relation to the matter of women's access to certain specialities and ranks. These reforms may require administrative provisions, but also legislative reforms in the case of modifications to organic or career laws. In the case of Argentina, for example, in 2011 the Army proposed the removal of restrictions over the access of women to combat units, such as in the cavalry or infantry, through an internal resolution (1143), covering both commissioned and non-commissioned officers. This was based on a request made by the then President and Commander-in-Chief (the first Second Lieutenants from these units graduated from the Military College in 2016). In Chile, restrictions over access to certain combat units were removed in 2016 following moves by the Ministry of Defence. In other cases, such as that of Brazil, the incorporation of women required a change in law. The admission of women into the Academy for Army career officers came at the initiative of President Rousseff in 2012, prompting Congress to enact a law establishing a five-year period for the Army to adapt its logistics, administration and any other issues that it considered necessary for the incorporation of women²⁴. The Army Cadet Preparatory School received its first group of women in 2016. Now in 2018 the first aspiring officers are entering the Agulhas Negras Military Academy (AMAN): 34 women of a total of 414 aspiring cadets form part of what is the first mixed intake to this historic academy.²⁵

With regard to political actors, for example, the Conference of Defence Min-

²³ See for example Carr-Rufino, Norma (1991). "US Women: Breaking through the Glass Ceiling". *Women in Management Review*. Emerald Group Publishing. Vol. 6, Number 5, pp. 10-16.

²⁴ Presidency of the Republic. *Lei N° 12.705, Dispõe sobre os requisitos para ingresso nos cursos de formação de militares de carreira do Exército*. August 8th 2012.

²⁵ Exército Brasileiro. Academia Militar das Agulhas Negras. *Entrada dos novos cadetes*. February 17th 2018. Retrieved from <http://www.aman.eb.mil.br>.


isters, which has met since 1995, tentatively included the issue in 2002 only to later relegate it and then to take it back on more seriously in 2008. In any case, the tendency displays that the process initiated in the mid-1990s, when Latin American forces generally opened themselves up to women, has taken root, and that cultural and institutional resistance (and others that have been omitted) form part of this natural process of development.

- **The question of units:** restrictions or openness to the entrance of women into combat units is an issue that is debated not just in Latin America but across the world more widely. The strength of one of the arguments – over physical capabilities – is somewhat debateable according to the study to which it accedes. Other arguments allude to the risk of capture and sexual abuse, problems of relationships between men and women that may develop within closed groups, the family needs that are said to be different in the cases of men and women, etc. Such arguments are increasingly weak, especially when all personnel face risks in current conflicts, regardless of whether or not they form part of the infantry, for example – the case of transport personnel at risk of IEDs – or given the fact that it is well known that human relations extend beyond the male-female dyad. While access to combat units was restricted during the first stages of incorporation, it was only after a relatively short period that female access to all units was opened up in various cases across the region. These debates are relevant and it is necessary to take into account the fact that while perceptions and opinions are openly manifested, especially those of masculine personnel, there also exist latent issues: ultimately the issue is also one of a labour market that is opening itself up to increased competition.

Table 8
The Incorporation of Women into Combatant Arms (officers)

Sources: Army and Ministry of Defence (Argentina). Website of the Army (Brazil). Ministry of Defence (Chile). Ministry of Defence and Military School (El Salvador). Army and Polytechnic School (Guatemala). Secretariat of National Defence (Mexico).

1. Argentina	Total
2. Brazil	Partial
3. Chile	Total
4. Ecuador	Partial
5. El Salvador	Partial
6. Guatemala	Partial
7. Mexico	Total
8. Nicaragua	Total



- **The creation of gender units/offices:** these kind of offices were key to the development of institutional policies. Their affiliation to ministries of defence was precisely what furthered their impact.

In some cases, such as those of El Salvador or Guatemala, they were ini-

tially located within the armed forces, although it should be noted that in each case the relationship between the defence staff and the ministries is somewhat specific. In both cases, gender offices were established within the organic structure of the ministries of defence in 2016.

The first case registered in the region was that of Argentina, which created a National Human Rights Directorate in 2005 in which gender policy formed a substantial element, with this quickly becoming a directorate that was located within the National Directorate. Cooperation with countries such as Ecuador was even sustained from this office, with the latter being the second case in which a ministerial unit was created within the organizational structure. Through advisory services within the ministry, Chile was also one of the main drivers of gender policies through international cooperation mechanisms, both with other countries and through multilateral bodies. In Mexico, the Observatory within SEDENA has also been key to collaboration in the development of institutional policies and to the promotion of links with society. Brazil, for its part, has created a Gender Commission within the ministry. It is specially tasked with addressing the incorporation of women into the Army and Navy, a move that was proposed in 2012.

Figure 2
Gender units/offices and their institutional location

Argentina – Ministry of Defence

Directorate of Gender Policy- National Directorate of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law

Brazil – Ministry of Defence

Gender Commission of the Armed Forces

Chile – Ministry of Defence

Gender Counsel, Undersecretary of the Armed Forces

Ecuador – Ministry of Defence

Gender Unit – Directorate of Human Rights, Gender and International Humanitarian Law

El Salvador – Ministry of Defence

Gender Unit

Guatemala – Ministry of Defence

Department of Gender. Directorate of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law

Mexico – Defence Secretariat

Observatory for Equality between Women and Men in the Mexican Army and Air Force. Human Rights Directorate

- **The family question:** One of the debates in the region is over the question of the family. It has two aspects: the argument that women are dedicated to the family and that this would prevent them from complying with the vicissitudes of military life - especially due to the nature of deployment locations and schedules. The second refers to pregnancy, especially during the period of entrance into the institution and the training of officers and non-commissioned officers within academies. The first issue had a short life; it was quickly realized to be a preconception that lacked any roots in reality. In fact, in cases where military salaries are low and the wives of military professionals are in work, the issue of the locations to which personnel are deployed became a complication for male personnel who could no longer move their family to remote places given that both husband and wife were responsible for contributing to household income.

With respect to the second issue – pregnancies while in military schools and academies – experiences and decisions taken have varied from country to country. It is even a topic of debate among female personnel themselves. It is in Argentina where the most substantial reform to provisions has taken place: Ministerial Resolution N° 849/2006 repealed the rules that prevented entry and/or permanence within the Military College of female students who became pregnant, thus providing the possibility for them to return to their studies. In the same manner, in 2007 the rules were modified to prevent women in the military who are pregnant and/or breastfeeding from being called up for combat, drills, shooting and/or any other activity not duly approved by a doctor; and in 2009 Ministerial Resolution N° 1273 regulated the situation of pregnant cadets/aspirants or volunteers, as well as pregnant women undergoing promotion. In Brazil, Law 12,705 of 8th August 2012 established with regard to future female students of the military academy the right to postpone sitting exams for up to a year in the case of pregnancy or of having a child younger than six months of age.

- **Openness to other institutions and to civil society:** The regional experience has shown that the work carried out by gender offices and units has been bolstered through an active exchange with academia and civil society. In cases such as Chile and Argentina, joint events and programs have been implemented since 2007 that collaborate in pushing the national and regional agenda; in Mexico the Observatory for Equality is an important channel for communicating with society, and – as

shown by the international event celebrated in November 2017 – with regional and international spheres.²⁶ Military training centers have also benefited from the increasing openness to this other sector, with professors and lecturers contributing to the training and sensitization of personnel to issues around gender. Relations with academia and civil society have also been important in carrying out analysis that permits the elaboration of policies, in the organization of events that bring together not just the civilian and military worlds but also other state institutions (such as institutes or ministries for women), and in the training and sensitization of personnel.

- **Participation in international peace missions:** this has occurred in particular since 2004, when several countries exponentially increased their participation in this type of mission while others initiated it. The need to adapt to international trends and United Nations training requirements provided a boost to considerations of a gender perspective, and certainly contributed to increased openness to the incorporation of women. Questions began to be posed, such as why it was not possible to send more female personnel (because there were insufficient numbers, or because their incorporation within command ranks were so recent that the ranks obtained were yet to meet the requirements), what minimum level of sensitization to the issue was required of personnel prior to participation in such missions, or those that arose from exchanges in the field with gender representatives from the mission and from system agencies, which returned in the form of reports to national capitals. The designation of gender focal points within national contingents – recommended initially by the United Nations – was one of the tasks facing gender units, together with providing the necessary training.
- **A transversal process for a transversal perspective:** observing the regional experience displays a process by which actors – especially the ministries of defence and armies, and their gender advisers or offices – gained awareness of its transversal nature. This implies the need to develop an institutional gender policy for which there will be interaction, in principle, with ministries and secretariats for women and foreign affairs. And for those who carry out public security missions, and especially any activities relating to the protection of women from violence, this also means linking up with procurator's offices, gender offices within minis-

²⁶ International seminar "The participation of women in armies around the world", organized by SEDENA, Mexico City, November 27th-29th 2017.

tries of security, and also with civil society. Meanwhile, in those cases in which they have begun to participate more actively in peace operations, this means linking with the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping, and more specifically its Gender Unit and Office of Military Affairs. Bilateral and multilateral cooperation within the region itself also deserves to be mentioned. Existing examples include collaboration between the gender offices of the defence ministries of Ecuador and Argentina, activities and inclusion of the topic within existing defence cooperation mechanisms between Argentina and Chile (the issue of gender is even present in the conformation of the Southern Cross Binational Force), and, as previously mentioned, at the Conference of Ministers of Defence of the Americas. All of this requires that actors working on gender issues receive adequate training, including the development of skills in cross-agency work and working with civil society.

The elaboration of the National Action Plans in Chile, for example, is testament to this permanent interaction. And it is the result of a process that was initiated from within the presidential institution when during President Bachelet's first term in office the position of gender adviser was created within the different ministries, the National Women's Service (SERNAM) was strengthened, and the process surrounding the action plan sanctioned in 2009 was initiated, starting with the basic link between the Ministry of Defence²⁷ and Foreign Affairs. The actions taken by the Armed Forces - and by the Army in this particular case - which culminated in the full incorporation of women into all arms, form part of a National Plan of Action. From this the country developed a second version in 2015, as well as a ministerial defence policy that included the creation of an Advisory Group on Policies Promoting Inclusion and Non-Discrimination (Ministerial Resolution of July 2, 2014)²⁸. This group was responsible, according to the Ministry of Defence, for the following 2016 policy definition: "The possibility of women, from this year onwards, to apply to all Army combat arms (until now women were unable to apply to the infantry or armoured cavalry). There is no longer any restricted area for women in this branch."²⁹

27 See: Villalobos Koenig, Pamela (2010). *Plan de Acción Nacional para la Implementación de la Resolución ONU 1325: Mujeres, Seguridad y Paz. La Experiencia Chilena*. Buenos Aires: RESDAL. Retrieved from www.resdal.org/genero-y-paz/paper-pamela-villalobos.pdf.

28 See Segura, V. (2017). *Chile: Breve descripción de la institucionalidad vigente respecto del empleo de las fuerzas armadas en tareas subsidiarias*. Project: Contributing to the Colombian peace process: collaborating with the Army's process to a peacetime footing through the provision of regional experiences and expertise from the Latin American region. The Case of Chile.

29 Government of Chile. Ministry of National Defence. *Gender*. Retrieved from <http://www.defensa.cl/temas-de-contenido/genero/>. Own translation.

- **Military education:** perceptions and opinions on the issue of gender are a latent variable. Changes are difficult to impose, and activities aimed at sensitization can serve as important a role as training efforts. But, without doubt, the key to any changes in this respect lies in the foundation of military life: military academies. It is in these that the process of socialization is produced, where basic values are acquired, and where the professional mentality takes shape. In this regard, while human rights subjects have been introduced in academies and schools across the region, the incorporation of a gender component as a relevant aspect of military education remains a major pending issue.
- **Gender, beyond women:** in some cases – one of the most prominent being that of Uruguay, which has not formed part of the present study – the ministries of defence and/or armies have begun, over the years, to look beyond the issue of women when considering a gender perspective. Gender of course covers the issue of women, but this is not exhaustive. We refer here not only to gender identities, but also to issues of personal and family life - including violence - that affect men and women. An example of this is the question of permission to marry, which in the case of some armies is a requirement for officers. Another aspect is paternity leave, which armies in countries like Mexico and Argentina have extended to male parents.

Citizenship through gender policy

An interesting case from the region with respect to the impact of gender policies is that of Argentina, a country in which relations between civilians and the military were a central theme on the agenda following the last military dictatorship. Through human rights policies, and specifically policies on gender, measures were promoted that in practice – be it consciously done or not– addressed more latent aspects of the professional military mentality: the soldier as a citizen. This is illustrated by looking at the progression of issues addressed by different ministerial resolutions in the early years:

- Resolution 1435, 2006: removes the prohibition on those who entered military training institutions of acknowledging their children or taking on a parental role.
- Resolution 1352, 2007: removes all restrictions preventing marriage between military personnel of different categories, or with members of the Security Force.
- Resolution 1757, 2007: authorizes single personnel with legally dependent children to request the award of military housing.
- Resolution 74, 2008: repeals existing Air Force and Army directives that allowed for information to be gathered on “regular and irregular family situations”.
- Resolution 198, 2008: creates the Commission for the Implementation of the National Plan for Nurseries and Responsible Parenthood.
- Resolution 200, 2008: removes the existing rules in the Armed Forces that required the authorization or permission of a superior in order to marry.

- Resolution 206, 2008: provides for a comprehensive review of rules within the Armed Forces and the subsequent elimination of all types of distinction between adopted children and biological children, and married and extramarital children.
- Resolution 208, 2008: restricts the availability of weapons to personnel who have received judicial or administrative reports for acts of domestic or interpersonal violence.
- Resolution 996, 2008: establishes that consideration of the housing situation of single parents and single parent households be a priority criteria during the allocation of housing.
- Resolution 1348, 2008: calls for the preparation of guideline for local, provincial and national resources in the fight against domestic violence.
- Resolution 50, 2009: standardized protocol of support for the Armed Forces' domestic violence teams.
- Resolution 15, 2010: guarantees access to medical benefits for children of volunteer soldiers, cadets and aspirants (men or women).

All this was accompanied by measures such as the creation of armed forces gender offices across the country (there are 21 as of 2017), interdisciplinary domestic violence teams (of which there are 11), support lines for cases of violence and reports of abuse, the review of sex education plans in military high schools, and the inclusion of the armed forces on the register of violence against women carried out by the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses. The adaptation of military regulations to the laws of equal marriage and gender identity currently in force in Argentina is also underway.

C. Gender and Missions

States in the Latin American region and across the world are working actively to protect citizens in cases of emergencies caused by natural or manmade disasters, to safeguard their physical security and property, to prevent acts of violence that tend to occur in the context of these events, and to protect human rights. Furthermore, countries from the region have supported and promoted the aforementioned United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 at the international level.

Over the last decade the World Health Organization has emphasized the need to address a gender perspective in the context of natural and man-made disasters.³⁰ According to data available at the time, and that which was collected through experiences such as Hurricane Katrina in 2005 or the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the probability of women being exposed to violence (domestic and sexual) or even human exploitation and trafficking increases in the context of emergencies. In another example, a study carried out by ECLAC in 2004 on the effects of Hurricane Mitch, which impacted Central America, stated that: "The emotional impact caused by Mitch resulted in feelings of fear and insecurity. The unsatisfactory nature of psychosocial care could have long-term conse-

³⁰ World Health Organization. Department of Injuries and Violence Prevention (2005). *Violence and Disasters*.

quences. High levels of violence in general, and in particular against women, contributed to feelings of insecurity among citizens. This had consequences on women's health and the wellbeing of their families." ³¹

Acquiring a gender perceptive thus allows officials, among other things, to distinguish between the effects of an emergency on men and women; to understand their vulnerabilities and also their capacities; to comprehend the manner in which gender relations within communities affect, for example, the distribution of humanitarian aid (a case that was experienced, for example, in the distribution of food stuffs by MINUSTAH, the UN Mission in Haiti); and to collect information that is disaggregated according to sex, etc. All such elements contribute to the resilience of a community, as well as to the positive mobilization of public opinion, which tends to be particularly sensitive to the protection of women's rights.

Risk management forms one of the "reaction activities" components that fall within the protection activities carried out by military forces in cases of disaster occurrence. ³² And from a gender perspective, some aspects stand out as among those to be addressed by armies:

- The inclusion of female personnel as part of the first response group.
- Relationships with other agencies, non-governmental organizations and international humanitarian assistance groups, including building relations with, and reporting to, gender advisers working as part of them.
- Incorporating vulnerabilities and other factors affecting the security of women into the planning process, both in terms of infrastructure and the distribution of food and sanitary products. This includes, for example, specific protection for vulnerable groups, including women and children, security on routes to schools and to markets, refuges, and health centers covering reproductive health.

Some examples from the region provide hope for an improved approach to the topic. For example, in Nicaragua in 2013 the Civil Defence Staff implemented 14 projects in which 65,529 individuals received training on: strengthening "re-

³¹ Bradshaw Sarah and Arenas Ángeles (2004). *Análisis de género en la evaluación de los efectos socioeconómicos de los desastres naturales*. Santiago, Chile: ECLAC, p.34. Own translation. One of the main experts on the issue plants that "Responsibility towards children and other dependent household members is a significant aspects of women's disaster work (...) which has important implications for preparedness, evacuation and other key disaster decisions. Domestic violence is largely unexamined in disaster studies but field reports from evacuation shelters and from battered women's shelters and responding agencies (...) suggest that some women are at greater risk of male violence in the aftermath of disaster." Taken from Enarson, Elaine (1998). *Through Women's Eyes: A Gendered Research Agenda for Disaster Social Science*. *Disasters*. Overseas Development Institute, Wiley, Blackwell Publishers, Volume 22, Number 2, June 1998, p.162. Also see: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2015). *Unseen, unheard: Gender-based violence in disasters*. *Global study*. Geneva: IFRC.

³² OCHA (2015). *United Nations Humanitarian civil-military coordination. UN-CMCoord Field HandbookI (v 1.0)*, Geneva: OCHA.

response capabilities within the structures of the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Assistance, principally at the community level, promoting a culture of risk management and the sensitization of different actors, with a focus on the rights of children and adolescents, **gender equality**, people with different abilities, the elderly, psychosocial support and climate change, as part of the topics taught in the training processes at all levels".³³ In another example, over the course of 2017 the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management in Colombia has worked on the design of a strategy of response preparation that includes a differential approach based on cultural and gender diversity.³⁴

With respect to the gender perspective in public security missions, there is also a long way to go. This includes aspects related to respect for human rights and the protection of citizens from gender-based violence. These are situations to which members of the army are exposed given their relationship with citizens through the conduct of public security operations.

Consideration of human rights and state forces involves two broad aspects: internal to the military institutions themselves, and towards the exterior as part of the operations in which they operate. These operations may be carried out within the national territory (be it through primary missions, as occurs in some countries where such forces play a role in the maintenance of internal order, or through secondary activities such as the provision of disaster assistance or community health missions, etc.), or abroad. Given the civic status of the members of military institutions, their participation in these operations is more often than not motivated by the desire to take back / reaffirm their civic status within wider society. Failing that, it forms part of the operational scenario. In this complex area of different rights to be protected, cross-cutting issues emerge affecting various state institutions, including those related to defence. Among these are the protection of civilians, instruments of force, the protection of heritage (including cultural), elections and health. The work carried out by the international community on any of these issues is intensive, including on the need to better understand international security and the characteristics of present day conflicts, together with the role of the international community and of the states that are part of it. One of these major developments is that of the gender perspective, based on the rights of women as one of the strongest and most consolidated currents of the mid-20th century and beyond.

³³ Army of Nicaragua. Civil defence. Projects. Retrieved from <http://www.ejercito.mil.ni/contenido/sociedad-civil/defensa-civil/defensa-civil-proyectos.html>.

³⁴ Retrieved from <http://portal.gestiondelriesgo.gov.co/planesdeaccion/Lists/ProgramacionActividades/DispForm.aspx?ID=225>.

The issues to be approached include:

- Bringing the percentage of women participating in this class of operations up to adequate levels.
- Revising personnel selection criteria, especially in terms of psychological capabilities.
- Specific training in order to provide the minimum necessary capacity to respond to situations involving relations with citizens, especially with women and children.
- The need for deployed personnel to maintain the highest standards of military professionalism and to adhere to a policy of zero tolerance in relation to acts of violence and/or sexual exploitation against the women and children they are responsible for protecting.

At the tactical level, other possible actions include:

- Establishment of mixed gender teams to consult local women and men during information gathering activities.
- Identification of the routes frequented by local women and of their schedules in order to provide greater protection during patrol activities.
- Ensuring the security of victims of sexual violence and/or domestic violence who approach military personnel.
- Contacting female victims along with the police or relevant state institutions.

5 Conclusions

The gender perspective in the field of defence and the armed forces is an established issue on the agenda of defence organizations in the Latin American region. Supported by changes to the social, cultural and political contexts of the various countries, it has established itself as one of the issues in need of policy development.

This has not necessarily occurred as part of a planned process taking place as part of military reforms. In fact, and especially when referring to the incorporation of women into the armed forces, it has developed almost as a parallel

process to the reformulation of missions, budgets and organizational structures. And although the ideal situation would have involved its consideration in the context of reforms, this does not mean that progress has not been substantial or that the trend towards increasingly serious considerations has not been strengthening. If at first responses revolved around cultural and social demands, and even to this day tokenism and resistance predominates,³⁵ countries in the region have made advances, even on issues that are still difficult to address in more powerful and developed armies from other parts of the world, such as opening up combat units, gender identity, and effective participation in combat. As an example of a case that has not formed part of this study but that shows this to be a regional trend, Uruguay provides an example of female combatants; there are several cases of women deployed on the front line as part of the Uruguayan contingent operating as part of the peace mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. And further still, on the issue of women in command, Bolivia and Venezuela provide examples in which female career officers have reached very high positions within army command structures. Due to a question of time – insufficient years have passed for female career officers to reach ranks higher than that of Major – this is still yet to occur in other countries, but it will surely be observed in the future.³⁶

Lessons Learned

1. Inclusion of a gender perspective needs to be seen as part of sector reform. Precisely because of its transversal characteristics, it impacts on numerous levels of military culture and structure, and processes will be more harmonious where they are integrated into broad definitions, such as the missions for which armies are prepared and the capabilities needed for them.

³⁵ Aspects highlighted by Juan Rial in 2009 remain pertinent: “Generally, men are prejudiced against women in the armed forces and, there are two polarized models of this prejudice. Many claim that women are fearless and hardly manageable during combat. Paradoxically, others claim that women do not have the physical capacity to complete the tasks that the military demands. Military institutions have to make adjustments for gender equality while juggling these two confronting positions. In Latin America, while there are growing demands for equality between sexes, the more global issue of gender is far from being addressed.”

“There are strong myths woven around women in the military. Allusions are made on women’s alleged *natural pacifism*, despite many historical examples that show the contrary. On the other hand, the military commanders are pressured to take on *politically correct standpoints*. As such, they are trying to include more women in their institution and spreading the word that they are doing so. *Tokenism*, in this specific case, is constantly used in television and newspapers to convey that there are women in the military. Therefore, instead of just showing us the traditional feminine professions in the military – such as women doctors, social assistants, or lawyers – we are shown women parachutists, ship crew members, and cavalry officers.” Rial, Juan (2009). *Women in the Military Organizations. Women in the armed and police forces: Resolution 1325 and peace operations in Latin America*. Buenos Aires: RESDAL. Retrieved from <http://www.resdal.org/genero-y-paz/women-in-the-armed-and-police-forces.pdf>.

³⁶ See the regional diagnostic elaborated by this project, especially the projection regarding the years and maximum ranks attained.

2. Resistance exists and is varied in nature, ranging from professional matters to competition within the labour market. But its inclusion within reform processes is inescapable and the longer it takes, the greater the subsequent effort to adapt to a context that has already changed. This is linked to changes in the traditional approach to understanding the military institution. It means discussing the incorporation of women into the military career, but also the missions that soldiers should fulfil and that society expects from them.
3. The process will be more successful when the two dimensions of the perspective are attended to. Within the armies themselves there is a need to ensure the capabilities necessary for achieving the missions currently bestowed on the institution. And, with regard to the exterior and their relationship with national and international society, missions involve increasingly close links to local populations. A transversal gender perspective is one that covers all aspects of the military institution on the basis of these two overarching questions: what do we need within the institution, and what does society need?
4. The armies of those countries that – like Colombia – are in the process of transformation, have the opportunity to integrate a gender perspective into that process, and thus for this to impact on their missions, personnel policies, education and operations, among the principle areas.
5. The regional experience shows the importance of diagnostics. Countries such as Mexico, Argentina and Chile began by carrying out a situation analysis, with the responsibility for this given to external actors from civil society and academia. This is relevant in that, as has been studied in sociology, it is very difficult for any institution to diagnose itself.
6. Women who have long-term experience with the army are important allies. This is not simply limited to consultations but instead as protagonists of initiatives.
7. Incorporating a gender perspective supposes the revision of internal regulations and legislation. This work has shown itself to be arduous, in part given the fact that the issue is woven into many different aspects of daily military life. It requires access to all offices and dependent bodies within the institution.

8. Gender is a topic on which opinions and perceptions are latent rather than manifest. This means sensitization activities are as relevant as training. In this respect, the greatest success occurs when it is understood that gender is a subject that encompasses both men and women, and actions such as sending female personnel to seminars on the issue are avoided, instead including significant proportions of male personnel (which, according to the data, account for the largest numbers).
9. The basis of a true gender perspective is military education. It should be included from the very beginning of military training: in the schools and academies for entrance into the institution.
10. At the structural institutional level, gender offices have proved their importance, both in terms of their existence and of their actions. In the majority of cases, their location within the structure of ministries of defence has provided them with the foundation they need to address such a sensitive topic. Even those countries that began by placing them within the armed forces ended up placing a primary office within their respective ministries of defence.
11. The institutional affiliation of gender offices is as relevant as their location within the structure: the most successful cases are those in which those responsible for the office have direct access to the minister or the chief of staff.
12. The transversal nature of gender requires those responsible for the issue in the army to build and sustain links with a variety of different actors. This begins with the ministry of defence, but also includes foreign affairs, institutes for women, procurators, and also judicial institutions. Furthermore, beyond the state, it includes civil society actors and academia. This requires preparation for working with other agencies in order to understand the distinct class of professional perspectives, and for cooperation between civilians and the military.
13. Civil society is an ally in this regard. The regional experience shows armies collaborating and engaging in exchanges with different organizations, especially for sensitization and diagnostic activities. It also provides a useful tool for revising structures and regulations, collecting information – which with regard to the participation of women tends to be highly dispersed, for relations with other political actors (among them congress, which is rel-


evant when considering legislative reforms), and to foment bilateral and multilateral cooperation on the subject through events and courses.

- 14.** One of the factors collaborating in the process, in the cases of Argentina and Chile, is that of the National Action Plans on Resolution 1325. They promoted exchange and aided in placing the defence sector within a broader strategy and policy.
- 15.** Furthermore, a factor that has assisted in fomenting the incorporation of a gender perspective in all cases is the international dimension, and, more specifically, participation in peace missions. It is an important entry point that can be used to place the issue on the agenda.

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