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DISCUSSING CONFLICT IN A GENDERED PERSPECTIVE: WOMEN AND THE REFORM OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY SECTOR

Gabriela João Verri¹

Laura Castro²

Luiza Bender Lopes³

ABSTRACT

It is safe to assure that the nature of warfare has changed over time; the fact that women suffer an inordinate amount of impact from it, however, remains. It is already known that the best way of ceasing violence against women is to include them in strategic and politic decisions related to warfare, as well as in every portion of the States' Security Sectors. Why, then, do women have their legitimacy questioned when they try to access the arena of security implementation and decision making? Gender essentialism – the portrayal of women as perpetual victims with the annulment of their agency - is one of the main issues that affect the security sector today and why a reform is needed. Meanwhile, states are still reluctant to address gender inequality - non-state and oppositions movements are the ones seen debating the subject, rather than the established governments. The discussion of the questions proposed and of a Gendered Security Sector Reform is of utmost importance for women's rights and for a better and more inclusive world, in and out of conflict.

1 Gabriela is a 4th year student of Law at UFRGS and director at UNHRC

2 Laura is a 2nd year student of International Relations at UFRGS and assistant director at UNHRC

3 Luiza is a 4th year student of International Relations at UFRGS and director at UNHRC

1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Security sector reform (SSR) is a recent trend in security politics and post-conflict reconstruction. In both global contexts as well as national and regional spheres, SSR encompasses assessment, monitoring and evaluation of social, political and economical rehabilitation processes, transitional justice and security policy. SSR has been particularly focused on the institutions responsible for these processes, from academia and civil society organizations to governmental institutions and international actors (Bastick and Whitman 2013).

In this section, we describe the ways in which security sector reform has been critiqued and shaped by gender studies and feminism. Thus, we outline the academic bosom in which SSR was fostered (critical security theories) and how it was primarily integrated with gender studies and feminist scholarship.

1.1 CRITICAL SECURITY THEORIES

The field of international relations has witnessed a broadening of what is understood by security since the decade of 1990, after the Cold War. Due to processes such as the emergence of regional armed conflicts – which have acquired an ethnical character, switching from interstate to intrastate – and globalization, the security concept has not been seen as exclusively related to the welfare of the state, as it was until then. The individual, which was a marginalized concern in the face of striving for national security, became the center of the debate for critical security theories.

With the dawn of the twenty-first century, debates on security embraced alternative agendas comprising, besides traditional military concerns, also non-militaristic security issues¹. In 1994, as a milestone of this shift, an UNDP report put forth a new definition of security as ‘freedom from want and freedom from fear’ (UNDP 1994). The movement was welcomed by critical security theories for its non-state centric perspective. Specifically, feminist security scholars saw in the so-called ‘human security paradigm’ a window of opportunity to put forth questions regarding the male dominance in the field, which is traditionally translated in terms of national security policy and interstate conflict (Hendricks 2011).

Post-realist theories of security are not always critical² when it comes to the

1 Non-military affairs are those related to political, economic, environmental and societal areas.

2 Here we use a foucaultian notion of ‘criticism’, which does not necessarily imply pointing wrong or misconstrued analyses of phenomena, but rather questioning the elements of that analysis that (not) interpreted as fixed assumptions (Foucault 1988).

analysis of or-thodox security discourse. In fact, they frequently unintentionally legitimize that discourse by using implicit assumptions in realist theory as skeletal data in their own analyses (Derian 1993). Although the focus of the critical security push was generally for people-centered conceptions of security, a classist approach was still being left outside of the most popular debates. For feminist IR theories, this meant that the notion of the individual as a pre-analytical subject was, as it had been with realist theories, futile to a gendered debate on security. Secondly, even if a substantial shift from interstate to intrastate violations were to occur, it would still be under the traditional male-dominated field of security policy, production of knowledge and overall traditional power structures (Sjoberg 2010).

Nevertheless, arguably the most severe criticism on mainstream security theory surpasses the possibility of reformation. It is an empirical fact that, behaving in realist logic, states will jeopardize the protection and safety of their own constituents for the benefit of their own security. For instance, a sensitive breaking point for critical security studies was the turmoil following the 9/11 attacks and its consequences for the developed West tightening of “homeland security agendas” as prioritized security strategy (Hendricks 2011). Consequently, the civilian abuse triggered by this *modus operandi* is indisputable. It follows that the human security paradigm is often essentially irreconcilable with stances which privileges the well-being of the state as the means to achieving, paradoxically, the well-being of its peoples (Blanchard 2003; Sylvester 2010).

1.2 GENDER STUDIES AND SECURITY

Critical interpretations of social discrepancies between the sexes (in the Western world) date back to the nineteenth century at latest, iconically represented by the demand for universal suffrage and, more broadly, the first wave of feminist movements. Gender studies, however, is a much more recent (1970s-1980s) and integrated field through which these analyses are made. Associated with notions fostered by the second and third waves of feminist movements, this primarily academic critique focuses on the implications of sexist cultural values and discursive constructions on societies under the patriarchal rule - *i.e.* all numerously representative peoples today and throughout history.

Although still largely restricted to specific, hegemonic loci of production of knowledge, gender studies was born a vastly interdisciplinary field. The drive to understand and identify contradictions within patriarchal social, cultural and political structures permeates from humanities and social sciences to natural sci-

ences. Our analysis here focuses especially on such vices in the context of security theory and policy at global and regional levels.

1.2.1. DEFINING GENDER

Women, both as political groups and as individuals, have historically been left outside of the political debate, especially in the securitarian sphere. But what are ‘women’ and what do they represent in terms of a social class and as a concept? Plainly put, ‘woman’ is the gender normatively associated with the female human body. Accordingly, gender encompasses all social and cultural significations attributed to a sexed body. Performing the female gender (being a woman) is reproducing and expressing characteristics culturally associated with the female human body (Butler 1990; Scott 1986). These differences that constitute the concept of gender depend on changing norms and expectations of what it means to be male or female in a certain social context (Deleahanty e Steele 2009).

In this sense, gender is roughly understood as the socio-cultural interpretation of the biological sex. Sex in its turn is the physiological distinctions between female and male bodies, and also has a clear discursive dimension. But this ontological relation between gender and sex posits a blurred idea that the first is an ‘artificial’ reading of the latter, which, in this optic, would be the ‘natural’ aspect of the male/female, man/woman binary. It must be noted, however, that even this seemingly ‘natural’ typology is the resulting conception of a sexist binary which is not pre-discursive. The very act of differentiating individuals through this reproductive logic - the male/female biological binary - is the product of a cultural discourse. Ultimately, this would mean that the notion of ‘sexual differences’ is also ‘artificial’, even through a biological approach (Butler 1998; Scott 1986).

The social construction of the female (sex) as associated to weakness and passiveness (gender) was what reinforced a hierarchical image of how gendered social relations were meant to be, especially when it comes to security (Peterson e Runyan 1993). During times of war, in a mythical way, men are viewed as “warriors” that need to protect “defenseless women” (Elshtain 1987). Thus, it is understood that both theory and practice of security “have been – and continue to be – almost exclusively male domains” (Tickner 1992, 28).

1.2.2 WOMEN AND WAR

The debate of the role of women in war is essential to understanding gender in security. War has always been an extremely masculinized field, which has usual-

ly been explained by men's sup-posedly "natural" ability for bellicosity. However, according to Steans (2006,48) "(...) women's innate peacefulness is as mythical as men's natural proclivity towards violence".

Even though the number of women taking part in military and other security areas has increased, there continues to be a strong resistance by society to accept women's participation in war. The justifications for excluding women from combat roles were incoherently conservative, such as that women's maternal instincts make them unable to kill, that their presence in battle would disturb men or that it would provoke men's sexual instincts (Steans 2006).

This supposed necessity of sustaining war as an exclusive male domain was based on culturally constructed notions of sex. Gender is a "system of meaning", a set of cultural institutions and practices that constitute the standards of masculinity and femininity. As mentioned by Delehanty and Steele (2009, 529), gender "(...) hierarchy is 'naturalized' and reinforced via political institutions that are supposed to 'protect' 'weaker' members of society". War as an institution relies on gendered images and so does the security sector. In order to deconstruct women's subjugated image, the empowering of women is crucial. And what IR feminists have been trying to do is essentially this: deconstruct women's subordination, aiming at gender emancipation (Sjoberg e Martin 2010).

1.2.3 FEMINISMS AND SECURITY STUDIES

There has always been much miscommunication between the feminist security scholarship and the mainstream security scholarship (Sjoberg e Martin 2010). Despite that, it has been proven that there is a notable global concern about gender issues, best exemplified by the adoption, by the United Nations Security Council, of the Resolution 1325 on "Women, Peace and Security" (Sjoberg e Martin 2010)³. The Resolution, that was approved fifteen years ago, highlighted the interdependence of post-conflict security, peacebuilding and gender equality (Bastick 2008).

International relations and feminist theory are contemporaries: both were developed in the twentieth century, in the context of a war-torn world (Blanchard 2003). In spite of that, according to Eric Blanchard and his study about gender and international relations, the field has only recently made a place for feminist analyses. When it comes to security studies, the professor has affirmed that

"security discourses are typically part of the elite world of masculine

3 The UNSC Resolution 1325 can be fully read on: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UN-DOC/GEN/N00/720/18/PDF/N0072018.pdf?OpenElement>

high politics. [...] [They] conduct the business of states, and too often war [...] with an atmosphere seemingly devoid of women and an interest in issues of concern to women” (Blanchard 2003, 2).

For feminists, international politics was such a thoroughly masculinized sphere that women’s voices were considered inauthentic. According to Blanchard, though, from this moment on, “feminist voices must be heard if the international system is to achieve a more comprehensive security” (Blanchard 2003, 2).

Liberal feminism believed that removing legal obstacles that prevent women from enjoying the same opportunities as men on a global scale was the effective way to reach gender equality (Sjoberg e Martin 2010, 19), empowering women and making them able to take part in security processes. *Positivist feminism* argued that to understand women’s subordination must hierarchies and their effects on a deeper level be investigated (Sjoberg e Martin 2010, 20), making us able to understand gender implications on foreign policy matters, especially in international security issues. *Critical feminists* analyzed the world as divided into different categories that interact on different levels, aiming to understand the functioning of the world and how to change it (Sjoberg e Martin 2010, 20), and then deepening this study in order to relate gender to international subjects, such as security. *Feminist constructivism* focuses on the discursive dynamics that produce a political conjecture and how this conjecture, in turn, produces discourse (Sjoberg e Martin 2010, 18). Lastly, *feminist post-structuralism* emphasizes the relationship between knowledge and power; noting that tradition-ally men dominate the sphere of learning and intelligence and that linguistic dichotomies privilege men against women, it is through the deconstruction of this hierarchical language that poststructuralist feminists believe we can lessen the hierarchy in our reality and conquer gender emancipation (Sjoberg e Martin 2010, 18).

1.2.4 THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF FEMINISM TO SECURITY STUDIES

Regardless of the usual scarcity of feminist work, either in security theory and in practice, there were a few feminist concerns that prevailed and contributed to the improvement of security studies. If gender is indeed relevant, there has to be a conversation between feminism and security studies, since this miscommunication between both scholars led to a lack of recognition of feminist work in the field (Sjoberg e Martin 2010).

Thus, one of the main contributions of feminism to the security studies is that it revealed that women actually exist. Our society does not have many women playing important roles in national and international political scenarios: less than

ten percent of the heads' of state are women (Sjoberg e Martin 2010), which gives us a false idea of a relative inexistence of women in global politics.

Feminists explored gendered images and discourses and showed how they affected international security studies and policies. The discourse of security was historically extremely sexualized, especially in the war sphere - which was grounded in inherited constructed expectations of gender roles -, and "(...) cultural images of male and female are rooted, at least in part, in just war discourse" (Elshtain 1987, 96).

Feminism critiqued discourses about women's security, arguing that its threats included domestic violence, rape, poverty and subordination, besides traditional war. They also deconstructed the link between women and peace – this false relation reinforced women's subordination and exclusion from security processes. It demonstrated that gender influenced state's security-seeking behavior, as well, and showed how gender subordination was a constitutive element of international security.

Finally, feminists proved the importance of women to the maintenance of the state. They showed how governments used women as instruments of foreign policy – an example was that conquering nations imposed their sexual demands on colonized women, which was very common in war times, being significant to security studies. Moreover, they demonstrated that the idea of marriage must exist in order to maintain state security. Since the construction of identity by the citizens was critical to the legitimacy of the state, and once women's identity had often been tied to their husband, feminists said that the institution of marriage was an important component of public security order (Sjoberg e Martin 2010).

1.3 SECURITY SECTOR REFORM: THE ISSUE OF GENDER

Acknowledging the historical gender inequality and its negative consequences to security studies, Security Sector Reform, over all, brings us the opportunity to create more inclusive security institutions. For security services to be fairly representative of its citizens, they must include women as well as men (Bastick 2008).

The Security Sector affected men and women in different ways, given their distinct roles during war, peacebuilding and post conflict reconstruction. The massive amount of power security forces owned could lead to all forms of human rights violation, wastage of public money and poor quality of security (Anderlini e Conaway 2004). The sexual abuse of women was also extremely common during times of conflict in states where the security services were powerful – in addition to conventional weapons, rape both as genocide and as terrorism has already been

used in several conflicts (Sjoberg e Martin 2010).

The two main objectives of Security Sector Reforms are to promote effective provisions for security and to strengthen efficient civilian oversight (Hänggi 2004). In the short term, the reform is needed so as to ensure that the sector will gain credibility in the civilians view. In the long term the reform is important in order to assure civilian control over military and security and to make sure that civilians can play an effective role in the Security Sector - (Anderlini e Conaway 2004). Integrating gender in SSR processes is a key condition to achieve a sustainable reform through a legitimate process. The core values for SSR are to be people-centered, locally-owned and based on democratic norms and human rights principles. Anchoring the reform in the values of human security ensures that it addresses the needs of the entire population, that is, the needs of women and girls as well. Thereunto, as explained by Megan Bastick in her work about integrating gender in post-conflict SSR, “A process cannot be people-centered if the needs of half the people are not represented, or democratic if half the population has no voice in it” (Bastick 2008, 7).

Notwithstanding, Security Sector Reforms were normally planned, agreed and implemented only by men, since they were normally part of the personnel responsible for the state's government and women were rarely in decision making points (Bastick 2008). For this reason, considering gender issues, integrating women into SSR means guaranteeing a democratic and legitimate process, deconstructing gendered images of male and women and their role in the security sphere, and, primarily, working towards the empowering of women.

2 STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

The gender lens is indispensable to any matter when dealing with the lives of individuals in a sexually hierarchized society. Vulnerable or otherwise, we are all affected by the dominance-oppression dynamics embedded in all relations and interactions circumscribed to a patriarchal reality. When it comes to the inability of securitarian institutions to provide for the well-being and safety of those who legitimize them, this kind of nuanced scrutiny is imperative. A violated society entails that something went wrong in the state's quest for protecting it from “external anarchy”. When *specific* kinds of violence are *especially* aimed at *specific* social groups - female, black, young, Kurd, transgender, Hindu, Hispanic - it signifies that this violence is not blind or unbiased and, therefore, neither should be those attempting to eradicate it.

It is broadly recognized that women's voices are frequently faint and inconsequential, but in security politics they are almost inaudible. The subject has been indisputably related to force, chill, rationality, firmness - all things masculine. It is evident that, as a result, the position that women take in international security politics is subsidiary. The same goes to attitudes and behaviors culturally associated with 'femininity' (Tickner 1988; 1992; Salahub & Nerland 2010⁴). Women are commonly placed in a quota for utopian pacifiers, with a voice too shrill and an attitude too motherly to be taken seriously as an important source of conflict-resolving insight.

In the rare occasions when women relevantly occupy positions of power within decision-making organs in national and international security, they often do so while portraying masculine features and rationale. In such cases, they are not praised as an example of the diversity of gender expression in women, countering the essentialistic linkage between women and 'femininity'. Rather, they are portrayed as extraordinary members of the female group, with regard given not to their qualities or social position as women, but to their exceptional objectivity, coolness, and overall 'masculine' standpoint (Blanchard 2003). Maruska (2010) uses the example of vigorous heads of state such as queens Elizabeth and Victoria, Margaret Thatcher and Angela Merkel and draws attention to how they are viewed as clear-minded exceptions in the eyes of security politics, coming to be called "Queen Warriors", as if being a "warrior" was what distinguished them from other women in power ("queens") or women in general. This illustrates not only a commonplace dissociation of women from war, but the aforementioned positive correlation between security politics and truculence.

The silencing of women as actors in the security sector, however, is not the only way in which gender relations are tuned out. Security Sector Reform is also funneled to a gendered perspective when it comes to tackling insecurity of women and other socially vulnerable groups by placing it as a priority on the security agenda (Mackenzie 2009; Shepherd 2010; Sjoberg 2010; Sylvester, 2010; Tickner 2001).

Moreover, the trivially appealing stigma of women as victims poses yet another problem when combined with the male dominance over SSR. The security

4 The cited paper (meta)illustrates this point perfectly. The authors exemplify the frequent dismissal of gender in SSR with the 2007 *Handbook on Security System Reform* issued by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). They point out that the book was issued without a single chapter putting SSR under a gender lens, being silently appended in 2009 with one chapter about the issue, without republication. Ironically, this point is made in the only paper that mentions the gender perspective on SSR, out of twenty articles in a publication entitled "The Future of SSR" (Sedra 2010, 263).

of this social stratum is generally dependent on the same group to which the perpetrators of their insecurity belong (i.e. ‘masculine’ men). Women should have autonomy and power over their own security and lives (Salahub & Nerland 2010, 266). Even if the masculinized universe of security were to regard the specific insecurities of women as an issue of utmost importance, the outcome would still be paradoxical. Women’s lack of agency over their own lives would still be dependent on masculine authority, rationale and actors, conserving women as objects of a male-dominated subject (Bastick 2008). On this account, reforming security as to embrace women and ‘feminine’ attitude is indispensable for proper representation, legitimization and accountability of the security sector.

Creating the space in which women can fully participate in their security, including defining security for themselves and their communities, as well as providing that security to others through participation in the institutions responsible, is fundamental to the principles of democratic and rights-based SSR, and to the effective provision of meaningful security. (Salahub & Nerland 2010, 266)

This parallel between security politics and the protection of these individuals is, furthermore, one that defies traditional concepts of security, which focus on protecting domestic order from the international “anarchic” system (Sjoberg & Marin 2007, 9). Counter-hegemonic conceptions of security is one of the foundations of gendered analysis in the field and, consequently, feminist security studies.

2.1 GENDER AND SECURITY

Feminist security theory is a relatively new realm of security studies in international relations. The field arose from critiques already being fostered in critical security studies in the late 1980s-early 1990s. Especially challenging realist and neorealist approaches to security, feminists began permeating the debate by analyzing the logics in which it was thought and operated, to questioning the very concept of security employed by traditional scholarship. Much like realist scholarship, feminist security studies are a multifaceted umbrella of theories and praxis. Notwithstanding visibly variant understandings on gender and security politics, there are clear common grounds among them (Blanchard 2003; Elshtain 1990; Hansen 2000; Sjoberg 2010; Tickner 1992; 1997), which are further outlined in this section.

Traditional security theory has been recurrently criticized by feminist theorists for its inefficiency to tackle the roots and the mechanisms through which conflict arises and develops. It is argued that, especially after the end of the Cold

War, hegemonic notions of security, which focus on inter-state conflict, were insufficient to manage such issues, mainly considering the increasingly intra-state character of bellicose disputes (Hendricks 2011; Tickner 1992; Zalewski 2015).

These ontological, epistemological and methodological insurgencies aim not only at expanding - or, in a more pragmatic drift, demasculinizing - the stances from which security is perceived, but also at addressing security in such a way that focuses on the voices and well-being of women, non-binary and gender-fluid persons. Therefore, in feminist security theory, reformation lies in questioning and redefining, initially, from where theory and policy comes and how its birthplace shapes securitarian practice, and further to where it goes, how individuals are affected and, particularly, how important women's "security" is for security politics (Hansen 2015; Blanchard 2003).

2.1.1 THE CONCEPT OF SECURITY IN FEMINIST SECURITY THEORY

For this more extensive consideration to occur, the dominant concept of security had to be deconstructed. Realist and neorealist scholarship in IR focused on a militaristic and state-centric concept of security, which "emanated from a masculine bias"⁵ (Romaniuk 2009, 143). According to this assumption, states behave in a power-seeking manner as a means to promote security, which is primarily threatened by unruly extra-territorial forces. With the end of the Cold War and the emergence of internal ethno-political violence, as well as economic and ecological hazard, critical security scholars began questioning the value of such outwardly focused concepts to the (inward) protection of human lives, ultimately developing alternative definitions of security (Campbell 1992; Krause and Williams 1996; Blanchard 2003). This new security paradigm undertook the incorporation of a more meticulous approach, envisioning the individual as the arena of realization of "security" and widening the agents and instruments accountable for it (Hendricks 2011).

Attempting to address structural violence⁶, the 'human security paradigm' (UNDP 1994) outlined the concept as "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear" (Galtung 1969, 172). Although it was embraced by policy makers and various institutions, the logics in which it was interpreted often placed Western states and agents ("development donors") in a condescending condition in relation to the "receiving" post-conflict or even simply developing countries (Hendricks

⁵ As self-evidently illustrated by Waltz's (1959) classical title *"Man, State and War"*.

⁶ "The violence done to people when their basic needs are not met" (Sjoberg & Martin 2007, 10).

2011). This indulgently hierarchical relationship is deeply problematic, but seems not to have been considerably addressed by the literature on SSR.

The shift from state security to individual security was a substantial step for guaranteeing security for women, but feminist theorists found it ineffective in this attempt. A concept of “human security” can be easily blinded by the prospects of a human experience of safety. The multiplicity of these experiences are exemplified by feminism when it acknowledges the radically discrepant position women occupy in society. Naturally, this is just one way in which human groups are distinguished, which is why feminist views do not intend to be exhaustive, but claim that relations be seen through a gendered standpoint as one of its many critical eyes. Thus, this humanistic concept of security is insufficient in its effort to tackle the insecurity of women as insecurity of the individual (Tickner 1992; 1997; 2001).

A gendered concept of human or individual security (considerably as opposed to that of ‘international security’) is especially important in the SSR debate⁷ when the particular soil that post-conflict contexts fertilize is taken into consideration. This specific atmosphere of violence that arises during and after armed conflict has remarkable gendered implications, as pointed out by Bastick (2008, 152)

“Sexual and domestic violence continues and increases in the post-conflict period, fueled by the availability of weapons, trauma among male family members, and lack of jobs, shelter and basic services.”

Thus, SSR must be developed not only with reconciliatory purposes, projecting the aftermath through the experience of preceding hardship, but with eyes on ongoing healing processes as affected by their own particular brutality (Bastick 2008; Rehn & Sirleaf 2002).

2.1.2. WHO “WEARS THE PANTS” IN SECURITY POLITICS?

As previously mentioned and illustrated, security politics was established in such a way as to allow for the status quo to replicate itself in yet another power and authority crest. This was done so in two well-defined, but cyclical, orders. Firstly, men take up most of the securitarian space and are the ones whose words echo in it. Security politics is a substantially ‘masculine’ environment in the sense that it is generally made up and thus represented by individuals of the male sex and gender. The second impulse for this cycle is the masculine rationale and atmosphere under which security politics operates, making it an environment that is also morally masculine. The cycle of male supremacy over the field, thereby, is structured as to

⁷ For practical as well as politico-ideological reasons, “the gendered perspective” will hereinafter be presumably implied when Security Sector Reform is mentioned in this chapter.

enable security politics to be chiefly shaped by men, yielding a male-oriented ethics, which in its turn fosters an ambience especially welcoming for men, bringing them in and completing and restarting the cycle.

This anatomy of security politics is not inherently bad for being one that privileges men and the ‘masculine’. However, as the cycle operates in two correlated fronts, its direct consequences are also two-fold. Firstly, it creates a powerful medium for exclusion of not only women, but anyone with less - or non-hegemonic⁸ - masculine attitudes, which is in itself an ethical conflict. This segregation is also one of the components of the second by-product of the ‘male recycling’ in security studies and praxis, by which behavior and mindsets viewed as feminine are checked at the door. It follows that this representational deficit is also a problem in a strictly practical sense. It is functionally disadvantageous to ignore a whole set of perspectives and *modi operandi* as it narrows possibilities and alternatives for the realization of the securitarian agenda, leading to a pattern of seemingly inescapable failures and unsuccessful operations.

That is what the “pants wearing” paradox illustrates. The securitarian scene is substantially dominated by men, those in control or “wearing the pants”. All the while, it demands that its agents operate according to masculine features and deal with issues from a masculine standpoint. That is to say that for anyone to be taken into consideration in security politics, they must portray characteristics associated with men and ‘masculinity’ - here represented by pants⁹. Men wear “the pants”, because men wear pants. In other words, the securitarian sphere is dominated by men because it is organically male-oriented, and vice-versa¹⁰.

This structural loop of masculinity cannot, therefore, be expected to spontaneously metamorphose into a plural and inclusive - and, consequently, more efficient - discipline. The possibilities for disturbing this chain and including individuals socially and culturally depicted as ‘feminine’ will be further discussed in this chapter.

2.2. WOMEN AS TARGETED VICTIMS

Bellicose conflict has different effects on men and women. What could be

⁸ The concept of hegemonic masculinity is described by Connell & Messerschmitt (2005) as varying models (or ideals) of being a male man in different societies, which not only doesn't necessarily describe the characteristics of men in these societies, but illustrates men as an exaggeration of these characteristics.

⁹ As opposed to “skirts”, the metaphorical equivalent to ‘feminine’ behavioral and operational characteristics.

¹⁰ As put by Delehtanty and Seele (2009, 527) “those who produce the discourse also have the power to make it ‘true’”.

a powerful statement is, in reality, simply verifiable in almost every war-zone depicted in history. Since a strict division of men and women often characterizes combat zones, when military forces, mostly comprised of men, leave for battle, the civilian population left behind consists, in turn, necessarily of women, children and the elderly (Skjelsbaek 2011). Thus, when the purpose of warfare is to target the civilian population, women often constitute the prime target.

Despite the recognition of the vulnerable situation of women, it is mandatory for the success of a debate on the Security Sector Reform that women are not portrayed exclusively as victims. As stated by Cora Weiss, President of the Hague Appeal for Peace and UN Representative of the International Peace Bureau:

“The point of UNSCR 1325 is not to make war safer for women, or turn women into war heroes, but to give women their rightful place in contributing to the ideal end state which is the absence of war.”
(Potter-Prentice 2013, 80).

With a critical interpretation of the notion of women as mere sufferers of violence, identifying and preventing their targeting in conflict becomes an important part of the discussion on gender, women and the security sector, but not its sole focus. Targeting, in turn, occurs often in different forms. Non-extensively, it is possible to consider three main approaches to the subject: sexual violence, social vulnerability and the racial approach.

2.2.1 SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The understanding of sexual violence as a wartime weapon and crime is fairly recent. Before the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia (1993), and for Rwanda (1994), the topic was not part of the agenda on international security. Previously, few had wanted to look into the mechanisms which created perpetrators or dealt with their punishment, even though the knowledge of wartime rape was widespread. Association of femininity and victimization was so naturalized — wars or no wars — that few laws had anything to say about it. The topic was, and in many stances still is, a taboo.

Fortunately, the advance of feminist scholarship into the sphere of the security studies has brought sexual violence into light as a form of dominance and control, aimed at maintaining patriarchy and the subordination of women within this social order. The reasoning is straightforward: in belligerent contexts, pre-existing gender relations become accentuated. If women are perceived as men's possession in times of peace, they will be perceived as such even more acutely in times of war (Skjelsbaek 2011).

Other identities such as ethnicity, religious belonging and political affiliation are also seen as interacting with the gender identity, putting some women at greater risk than others. Thus, the understanding of patriarchy became more complex, because it was no longer seen as simply man having power over women, but as men belonging to the most powerful ethnic, religious or political groups (Skjelsbaek 2011).

In Serbia, attention was brought to the frequency and severity of wartime rape, characterizing it as a form of genocide and torture. Plans allegedly written by Serbian army officers mentioned the raping of women and children as an efficient tool in the process of ethnic cleansing of Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Latin America, attempts to crush oppositional elements of the civilian population singled out women on the basis of their affiliations and individual political activities (Slojberg e Martin 2007). Ultimately, the notion of what was considered sexual violence was expanded to include, in addition to rape, forced prostitution – the “drafting” of women to provide sex to soldiers – or marriage, genital mutilation and forced nakedness (Bastick 2008).

2.2.2 SOCIAL VULNERABILITY

The concept of social vulnerability emerged and is usually linked to the discourse on natural hazards and disasters. It refers to the inability of people to withstand adverse impacts from multiple stressors to which they are exposed. In environments of conflict, however, actors within the civilian protection network have never agreed on how to define “vulnerability” (Carpenter 2013).

In the Geneva Conventions¹¹, vulnerability is related to physical characteristics that can make an individual less able to withstand attack and escape from harm. Women are often considered inherently vulnerable due to physical reasons, when, arguably, that is not always the case. Excluding the factor of age, only women who are pregnant or lactating possess vulnerabilities stemming from their biological sex (Carpenter 2013). The generalization of the whole group “women” as vulnerable contributes to the victimization and portrayal of women as beings without agency.

To others, however, vulnerability is socially induced regardless of physical characteristics, and some groups are made more vulnerable than others based on their capability to access resources, the roles with which they are expected to comply or their geographic location. In that case, women can be vulnerable apart from

11 The Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols form the core of international humanitarian law, which regulates the conduct of armed conflict and seeks to limit its effects (ICRC, 2010).

age or motherliness (Moser & Clark 2001). Often finding themselves as heads of household “when the men go to war”, women can be displaced and have difficulty acquiring basics that are customarily distributed through male heads of families. Moreover, they can be expected to surrender their norm of living and to submit to rules established by those who are, purposely or not, ignorant of their culture, besides suffering the risk of physical attacks (Carpenter 2013).

2.2.3 RACIAL APPROACH

As mentioned in this section, some women can be at a greater risk in combat zones due to their ethnicity. In order to develop the racial approach, one has to consider the vision countries known as colonizing powers have perpetuated in their colonies. Traditionally, the object of analysis is the Western countries. These nations have historically created cultural and racial stereotypes based purely on their beliefs, often viewing colonial territories as inferior, with less civilized cultures (Slojberg e Martin 2007).

Prejudiced perceptions that are ingrained in a cultural mindset are almost always transferred to the doctrine or minds of those who end up serving in the army, in police forces or even integrating militias. When mixed with the already mentioned visions on gender, they become an even bigger minefield. Even though the security sector environment is mostly comprised by men, it is important to highlight that these wrong perceptions can also reach the few women present in the decision arena. Having applied the theory to them, postcolonial feminists noted that, regularly, women present in the arena could become very biased in their perception of the emancipation needs and wants of other women (Skjelsbaek 2011).

Just as feminists assert that society exists with knowledge primarily set forth by men, it is possible to find fault in the knowledge solely based on the experiences of privileged Western women (Slojberg e Martin 2007). The struggle to include women in all processes related to the security sector has become even more inclusive as a way to fight stereotypes, such as the vision of women from undeveloped or developing countries as poor, undereducated, victimized and lacking in agency. The fight on gender subordination will not be exhaustive until based on the relation of gender, race and culture.

2.3 THE ROLE OF WOMEN AS ACTORS IN THE SECURITY SECTOR

For purposes of research, it is broadly recognized that the security sector is

comprised of three main branches: groups with the authority and instruments to use force (military and police forces); institutions that monitor and manage the sector (government ministries, parliaments or the civil society); and the structures responsible for legislative application (the judiciary, prisons and human right commissions). Years after the adoption of Resolution 1325, women are still a minority in all three areas (Anderlini & Conaway 2004).

2.3.1 THE SPACE OF WOMEN IN THE SECURITY SECTOR

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In the military sector, some countries tend to have more favorable statistics on the participation of women when analyzed individually. Not surprisingly, countries that have just gone through conflict, like South Africa and Sierra Leone, have larger female participation in the army and/or police forces, respectively 29% and 15%. The increase in numbers is due to the fact that changes in gender roles are likely to happen during armed conflicts, when women often join armed groups or take other responsibilities to ensure their family's safety. When conflict is over, a new recognition of the contributions women make to security can arise (Bastick 2008).

However, the same cannot be seen in peacekeeping missions sponsored by the UN. In January 2007, the UN's first all-female peacekeeping contingent, made up of 103 Indian policewomen, was deployed in Liberia. Even though the effects of the mission were very positive, the feat has not yet been repeated. In October 2011, women comprised only 3,6% of military experts, 2,6% of troops and 9% of police in all missions (Bastick 2008).

In the institutions responsible for the management of the security sector, the growth of women's participation is also present, but not satisfactory. In January 2008, women ministers in 185 countries held 1022 portfolios. Only six of these were portfolios for defense and veteran affairs (IPU 2008). Two foci related to this information must be addressed: firstly, that there are, still, not enough women participating in politics and, secondly, that the women who participate are not given positions related to the Security Sector.

Another issue is that, too often, security policies are implemented in a manner that excludes civil society input, and, currently, women's organizations are one of the main mechanisms by which women can voice their security-related concerns. In the next section, we will see that, beyond that, these organizations can also be very important security providers.

The increase in women's participation is but the beginning of the fight for gender equality in the security sector. When women achieve a position of leadership within the area, other problems arise. Women leaders are often required, disproportionately, to be role models (Potter Prentice 2013). Frequently, it is expected of them to make more impressive progress in the issues they attend to, precisely because they're women. Catherine Ashton, Angela Merkel, Hillary Clinton, Michelle Bachelet and others have all suffered from unfair misogynistic judgment of their capacities.

In the military sector, in turn, female police officers are sometimes expected to do little more than cook lunch for male police officers. Even if they are allocated to functions pertinent to their actual job as police officers, women tend to remain in special response and investigation units related to sexual violence (Potter Prentice 2013). Despite undoubtedly recognizing the importance of said units, some critiques suggest that this is a new form of sidelining women, keeping them involved in "women's issues" and still not allowing them to participate on other security affairs.

2.3.2 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WOMEN IN THE SECURITY SECTOR

Despite the troubling data shared in the last section, women are slowly conquering their space and right to an opinion within the Security Sector. Furthermore, the effectiveness of having women in the differing branches related to security has been proven by distinct studies. From the ability to use identity roles such as mother/daughter/wife to influence events, as seen in the monitoring of ceasefire arrangements by the Manipuri Mothers¹² in India; to the highlighting of different perspectives on peace process issues, as seen in the participation of El Salvadorian female ex-combatants in the DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration) programme of 1992. Women have had important roles in solving various conflicts in the past century (Potter Prentice 2013).

Women's organizations are in the center of most accomplishments regarding

12 The Manipuri Mothers were mothers of the Meetei ethnic group, which constitutes 27% of the population of Manipur, a state in northeastern India. The group monitored ceasefire arrangements in northeast India/Manipur when an armed conflict began between the government and the ethnic minorities in 2004 (Potter Prentice, 2013).

security achieved in recent years. Fighting the blockage in their access to the decision arena, these groups have provided a range of services to victims of violence and war, such as shelter, legal advice, medical and psychological assistance (Bastick 2008). While offering aid in important steps to reintegration, the organizations are often recipients of information about local-level security threats, having precious insights in the security initiatives necessary to detain them. Moreover, they also have an acute understanding of the needs of post-conflict civil society, standing in an ideal position to make recommendations to the governing capacities and forming bridges between local communities and security policymakers, strengthening local ownership (Valasek 2008).

This happened in Liberia, for example, after the end of the 1989-2003 civil wars. Women's groups that, throughout the conflict, worked for peace, continued to work for the reconstruction and reconciliation of women's rights after the conflict. The organizations urged that women should be full partners in the creation of the National Security Policy and of the Defense Strategy. They also made several concrete recommendations as to how the process could be more responsive to gender issues - such as a penal reform that addressed the needs of male, female and youth prisoners; and the inclusion of trauma counseling in the training of security forces. Their demand led to the formation of a Women and Children's unit in the Liberian prisons, the training on gender and gender-based violence of prison officers, and the adoption of a 20 per cent quota for women's inclusion in the military (Bastick 2008).

Besides providing information, women have also been responsible for the increase in inclusivity beyond that of gender in several post-conflict processes. In Afghanistan, the presence of women supported from below the inclusion of other minorities, such as the Uzbeks, in the 2003 Loya Jirga¹³, where a new Afghan Constitution was drafted. Research has shown that inclusive processes, besides being more credible, have a majorly higher success rate than their counterparts (Potter Prentice 2013).

Women's ability to communicate and network with segments of society that may be off-limits to others is another important factor. Possessing better communications skills than their male correlates makes women officers better equipped to institute a community-policing model, earning cooperation and trust. Research demonstrates that women officers also use less physical force, are less likely to use

13 A Jirga is an assembly of leaders that make decisions by consensus and according to the teachings of Islam. A Loya Jirga is a special type of Jirga that is mainly organized for choosing a new head of state in case of sudden death, adopting a new constitution, or to settle national or regional issue such as war. In Afghanistan, Loya Jirgas have been reportedly organized since at least the early 18th century (TIME, 2013).

that force in excess and are better at defusing potentially violent confrontations with citizens (Bastick 2008).

The capacity to prioritize peace-making over power-sharing is another example of an area in which women have fared well. Be it in Northern Ireland, in 1996, or in the Arab Spring countries, in 2011, women's groups have effectively managed to organize for peace across party lines.

2.4 FEMINIZING/DEMASCULINIZING SSR

'Masculinity' has been historically shaped as to portray agency traits that are promptly related to 'public values' and their consequent administration (Delehanty & Steele 2009, 528). In a supposedly complementary binary perspective, an atmosphere has been established as to standardize the public/private polarity in gendered categorization. While masculinity is related to agency in the public sphere (rationality, leadership assertiveness, autonomy, practicality), femininity is left with the mastery of the home, emotions, interpersonal relationships, even sensuality - layers of the scope of private life (Steans 2003). This socially imprinted labor division of genders, based on an arbitrary appointment of personality traits, sustains a system that privileges men as the political protagonists and delegates women to the domestic realm (MacKenzie 2010).

For instance, in ontological security theory, by which states behaviors are analyzed as having a Self-identity, attention has been called, through intersections with feminist theory, upon the fact that states present a male self, that is, behave in traditionally masculine orientation and logics (Delehanty & Steele 2009; Wadley 2010). Thus, for the demasculinization of the security sector, a broader effort must also be directed toward the demasculinization of the state as a whole.

2.4.1. ESSENTIALISM AND UNIVERSALISM

There are two socio-cultural axioms that demand critical examination if we are to understand how the exercise of power operates within gender discourses in security studies and politics. As hitherto indicated, it is conventionally understood that each gender (of only two) comes with a rigid 'toolkit' of abilities that are - favorably - supposed to complement each other. Moreover, these 'toolkits' are arranged in the social psyche according to a specific conception of what it is to perform each of these genders. This understanding about the inherent qualities of women and men is based on a westernized set of values and frame of reference. Thus, being a person with a female biology traditionally limits the individual not

only to a notion of ‘womanhood’ but to *the* Western notion of womanhood. These two categorical limitations to the female individual are, respectively, what the literature refers to as ‘gender essentialism’ and ‘universalism’ (Fellmeth 2000; Hobson 2007; Jacob 2008; Quareshi 2012).

According to an essentialistic notion of gender, men are to be objective, fierce, assertive, cutting edge; while women are portrayed as pacifistic, communicative, nurturing, subtle, delicate. One is skillful in all the ways the other is not, and considering a specific set of skills that are demanded in security politics, one of these toolkits is more invaluable than the other, which through an essentialistic optics will tell us that men, with their specific personality apparatus, are the ones whose tools are a better fit for securitarian ventures (Jacob 2008).

In this sense, even in the absence of an excluding masculine power structure, if the most effective ways of dealing with security actually did demand an unemotional, straightforward, militaristic approach, the prevalent essentialistic cloud around the gender binary would suggest a crushing preference for men in the field. This acutely realistic scenario is most problematic when considering that security, even as seen as the ‘security of the state’, is a matter that affects women, men and other forms of counter-hegemonic gender expressions, bringing us back to a much discussed representational failure (Fellmeth 2000). Thus, for the foreclosing pattern of the security sector to be broken, gender essentialism, or the groundless belief that women or men are inherently anything must be overcome.

Another controversial facet of essentialist and universalist approaches to women’s experiences is its insensitivity to their disparities through race, class, sexual orientation, religion etc. Black and post-colonial feminisms show especial concern with this homogenization, indicating that most conceptions about being a woman are actually expressions of being a white woman in the developed West. Essentialism even within feminist theory is a recurring criticism that black feminism bestows upon whitened ideas of womanhood. As illustrated by Harris:

“Essentialism in feminist theory has two characteristics that ensure that black women’s voices will be ignored. First, in the pursuit of the essential feminine, Woman leached of all color and irrelevant social circumstance, issues of race are bracketed as belonging to a separate and distinct discourse - a process which leaves black women’s selves fragmented beyond recognition. Second, feminist essentialists find that in removing issues of “race” they have actually only managed to remove black, women - meaning that white women now stand as the epitome of Woman” (Harris 1990, 552).

Post-colonial feminism particularly argues that Western feminist scholarship is embedded in its discursive dominance over the descriptions of experiences of

women. As such, its attempts at describing the experiences of ‘third world women’ in itself produces a silencing homogenization of these experiences (Mohanty 1984).

2.4.2 ASSESSING QUEERNESS IN THE SECURITY SECTOR

The main literature on the topic is still attached to a dual conception of gender, and further as an exteriorization of the biological sex - either male or female. Considering that the gender binary is the established form of gender expression today, it is indispensable to look at it through the socially performed man-woman model. However, the dismissal of counter-hegemonic or ‘queer’ representations of the sexed body (Butler 1999) which extrapolate the traditional man-woman binary is yet another issue to be tackled. Shepherd critically observes this invisibility by stating:

“The marginalization of queer sexualities in security, economic/development and state-building policy, whether by omission or by design, both affects and demonstrates whose participation is considered legitimate, whose interests are represented and, ultimately, whose modes of being in the world are deemed to be of value.” (Shepherd 2010, 148)

Accordingly, the issue of representation can go beyond the absence of a social group in a decision-making sphere. It gets even more troublesome when it reveals the recognition deficit that deems individuals not only as unfit for certain roles - as is the case for women in security - but as inadequate as a state of being. In this sense, policies that address “men-women-and-children” leave a whole spectrum of groups outside of its belt of protection, ignoring and most worrisome loading the weight of a violence these individuals already carry for defying gender norms (Shepherd 2010, 154).

2.5 TOWARD GENDER EQUALITY: GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND SPECIALIZATION.

As recommended by scholars and policy makers in the field of SSR and taking into account all that has been hitherto discussed, two main fronts of action are identified as means to ensure full representation of women - at least in a first restructuring movement - in the security sector. Firstly, through a practice known as ‘gender mainstreaming’, the gender perspective must become a given when any policy is discussed. That is to say that, in studying and implementing measures to ensure the security of individuals and even of states, special consideration must always be given to the social differences between men, women and queer sexualities and gender expressions, striving to avoid homogenizing the experience of insecurity

through disparate social strata. The ultimate goal here is to make the gendered implications of any plan of action as hardwired to security strategies as is the case, for example, of resource allocation or economic repercussions (Aolain 2009; Bastick & Torres 2010; Jacob 2008).

It is clear that gender mainstreaming requires a long term commitment of security-related institutions, from the legislative, judiciary, oversight organizations to police and military forces, regardless of the plan of action adopted. However, Hudson (2009) points to a bifurcation in mainstreaming theory and practice. According to a more instantaneous approach, which the author calls ‘integrative gender mainstreaming’, women are to permeate in existing institutions with a long established (super)structure, which due to socio-cultural phenomena described above reproduce traditional masculine stances on state, security, peace-building, development and post-conflict rehabilitation. This reformist stance suggests that, firstly, integrating women and gender discourse to security politics increases its legitimacy before independent organizations and society as a whole, and especially counts on women’s organizations to cast oversight over state policing on human and international security (Hendricks 2011).

Criticism to this strategy focuses on its shyly adjusting intentions of balancing gender representation and points to an ineffectiveness in actually changing gender relations from its roots. Accordingly, Hudson (2009, 42) stresses that

“gender mainstreaming may offer greater visibility for women in the political sphere, but if women’s participation remains confined to liberal individualist ideology which is not representative of women’s experiences at the grassroots level, gender relations stay untransformed”

Moreover, these subtle reformations are further criticized by feminist scholarship for its universalistic pretension, considering it is generally imported from Western security sector frameworks without assessing the problems embedded in their structures (Aolain 2009, 1083). Further, it is likely to tune out the discrepant modes of gender relations in the West from those, for example, in post-conflict African nations.

“[...]an important conclusion drawn here is that the reformist mode of security sector reform contains an explicit modeling on western security sector organizations with a compelling blind-spot about the gender distortions inherent in these institutions and their subsequent export to other states” (Aolain 2009, 1072).

The alternative approach to gender mainstreaming would be what Hudson (2009) calls an “agenda-setting approach”, through which security frameworks and rationale are to be completely rethought and thus rebuilt in a gendered perspec-

tive that doesn't simply stabilize gender balance, but that alters gender relations in security politics. This revolutionary approach is funded on the idea that the sole inclusion of female actors, gendered lenses and – what is perceived as – ‘feminine’ attitudes are insufficient to tackle the representation gap between male and other genders in policy-making, since the institutions and mechanisms which they would permeate are already structured in male and state-centric logics. Thus, an integrative approach would shade the current system but leave it organically unchanged (Hendricks 2011).

Finally, taking exceptional examples of women who exceed expectations of influence in the field has been recurrently noted as inefficient in transforming the situation of women as a whole in the security sector (Zalewski 2015, 7). As Levy puts it “if you're the exception that proves the rule [...], you haven't made any progress”, the rule here being that women and femininity are disproportionally undervalued in the security politics stage. The fact that the female voice must be coded in masculine undertones to be equitably contemplated in the securitarian sphere translates as the masculinized hegemony in security studies and practice (Hansen 2000; Shepherd 2015; Sjöberg & Martin 2007; Tickner 1997; 1999).

3. PREVIOUS INTERNATIONAL ACTIONS

Considering the juvenescence of the field of Security Sector Reform and the discernible blooming of gender issues in international politics both as dating around the end of the Cold War, international attention to the topic is still shy of a binding framework (Neuwirth 2002). The cornerstone for women's human rights in the international arena is over 30 years younger than Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As such, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) of 1979 is the formalization of the inception of an effort directed towards bringing ‘women’ and their experiences into the historically male-centered concept of ‘human’.

Informally known as the “women's bill of rights”, the CEDAW puts women in the center of the human rights debate as subject to specific forms of protection. Although the Convention abides to the same universalistic standpoint that traditionally directs international human rights theory and practice, it has been said (albeit mainly by Western authors) to have noteworthy qualities when considering diversity in women's social identities and experiences. To Baldez (2011) one of CEDAW's main exploits is identifying a common-ground in women's generally multitudinous political interests: a struggle against gender-based discrimination.

As the first binding legal instrument to address the need to ensure full participation of women in politics as well as to tackle women's human rights violations as a specific matter of insecurity in the international arena, the CEDAW made way to gendered perspectives of security politics, particularly under the UN umbrella. Although criticism to the Convention and related documents has been recurrent in topics ranging from gender essentialism to the tool's practical reach, its symbolic importance is unparalleled (Bastick & Torres 2010; Defeis 2011; Parpart, Rai & Staudt 2002).

In 1993, undertaking CEDAW's disregard for gender-specific violence, the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW) sought to fill such gaps. The DEVAW defines violence against women as

“any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life” (UNGA 1993, art. 1).

Its universalistic approach, as with the CEDAW, was deemed inoperable by several legislations, seeing as ratifying states are bound to a positive effort towards ending gender-based violence and “should not invoke any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid their obligations with respect to” it (Defeis 2011; UNGA 1993, art. 4).

The mobilization for women's rights and space in the political arena that started circa 1975, culminated in the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PFA), a formal outcome of the debates held at the Fourth World Women's Conference. The Beijing PFA translated a much more diverse range of interests relating to gender relations and experiences of “womanhood” throughout the globe, permeating North-South and West-East divides. Going beyond CEDAW's main concerns about women as especially vulnerable subjects to human rights violations, the PFA focused on a much broader agenda, significantly addressing questions of “participation in relation to inequalities of power and decision-making between women and men at all levels” (Kabeer 2005, 8).

In this spirit, it was agreed by all governments involved in the Conference that a minimum quota of 30% would be established for women in decision-making positions. However, taking the UN system as an illustrative sample, this goal is not yet tangible. From 1992 through 2011, less than 4 per cent of signatories to peace agreements were women and as of 2014, only one percent of spending in SSR was being allocated in the promotion of “initiatives that *consider* gender equality to be a significant objective” (UN Women 2012, 2; UNSC 2014)

The Beijing PFA, however utopian, lodged the groundswell of principles un-

der which it was established. In the security sector these have translated, firstly, into the indispensability of expressive participation of women in decision- and policy-making processes as the means to achieve peace, security and human dignity; and, secondly, by placing equality between women and men and, thus, freedom from discrimination as questions of utmost importance for the promotion of human rights as a whole (ITGN 2012).

It was under these principles that UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women and Peace and Security was unanimously voted into enactment in 2000. The document aims at mainstreaming gender in all peace- and state-building operations by placing women and gendered perspectives as key features of conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction.

Fostered under the UN system and through the heads and hands of the Non-Governmental Organization Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (NGO WG), the text and context of the resolution advocate for (neo-)liberal discourses on 'women' as well as security and peace-building. Recurrently criticized for its presumptuous 'universality', the document adopts a notion of development that poses conflict-recovering and industrialized ("donor") countries at distinctive hierarchical levels (Shepherd 2008).

"Following a conventional narrative of development, the motif of peace (state) building is visible as a process of maturation, where "zones of conflict" are assisted by the "international community" to integrate into global mechanisms of production and consumption thereby securing not only the conflicts in question but also the reproduction of a neo-liberal world order. [...] The productive power of UNSCR 1325 and associated frameworks for action to discipline political authority reproduces the international as a domain of peace that owns the necessary knowledge to "develop" domestic societies bounded within the confines of the territorial state." (Shepherd 2008, 399)

As a paradigmatic tool for feminism and security politics, the document poses an unprecedented move toward integrating women and gender in the securitarian sphere. Illustratively, it was the first time the UNSC officially addressed the question of gender representation in international security and conflict. Bell and O'Rourke (2010) analyzed, both quantitatively and qualitatively, a comprehensive database of peace agreements signed during the period of 1990 through 2010 and their (absence of) reproduction of the guidelines put forward by UNSCR 1325. They found that only 16 per cent of these accords specifically mentioned women, although recognizing a shy increase in these mentions post Resolution 1325. However symbolic the document may be, even before a practical analysis is made, research suggest a modest impact of the resolution for women in peace and security (Bell & O'Rourke 2010).

Between 2008 and 2009, a series of Security Council Resolutions which underpinned Resolution 1325 were adopted, each with its specific concerns. Resolution 1820 of 2008 supports provisions for protection of women against sexual violence in armed conflict, developing the concept of sexual violence as a weapon of war (UNSC 2008). It also touches on the subject of women's voices in peace and conflict dialogues. The subsequent document, UNSCR 1888 explores the same subject but in a more effect-oriented manner. It goes on to urge the implementation of actions to deal with sexual violence particularly in bellicose contexts (UNSC 2009). The last of the series, Resolution 1889 also emphasizes the political and practical aspects of UNSCR 1325 by making provisions for measures that would allow women to take up due space in international security politics and peace-building efforts (UNSC 2009b). Thus, these last resolutions serve as tools to materialize the previous couple into the realms of tangibility for women everywhere (UN 2010).

The material effectiveness with which these actions touch the topic of gender in post-conflict societies is still noticeably shy. The reasons for this range from deeply-rooted social mechanisms of inequality and exclusion to governmental priority tendencies in the direction of resources toward state-building and peace-keeping. Therefore, international action thus far must be acknowledged as but the seed from which long-term commitment toward gender mainstreaming in the security sector should grow. That is if the international community commits itself to seek idyllically equitable and yet richly diverse societies in which gender relations - if still present as a social phenomenon at all - do not serve discourses of subjugation and oppression that limit possibilities of fulfillment of a dignified and peaceful human existence.

4 BLOC POSITIONS

The presence of women in the Armed Forces of **Argentina** is recent: the country only authorized their participation in the Army in 1997, in the Air Force in 2001, and in the Navy in 2002 (Taringa 2014). Nowadays, though, the female participation in the field has increased considerably: women now represent 15 per cent of the Argentinean Military (Argentina 2014). Argentina recognizes the high importance of Security Sector Reform processes, having established gender offices in each area of the military, implemented the "Report on the Integration of Women in the Armed Forces" and created the "Consejo de Políticas de Género para la Defensa" (Council of Gender Policies for Defense) (Ministerio de Defensa 2010). Thus, they have become a regional reference when it comes to gender policies in Armed Forces, which promoted their empowerment and participation in all levels of Peacekeeping Operations, as defended by UNSC Resolution 1325. Argentina believes that this

resolution, along with Resolution 2151 about women's equal and effective participation and full involvement in all stages of the security sector reform process are key terms to the promotion of an effective SSR (Peace Women 2014).

The Constitution of the **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** states in its preamble that this is a country “without any discrimination or subordination”; women in Venezuela are seen as indispensable for the effective development of the society. This role of women was made clear during Hugo Chavez's presidential rule, when a SSR was implemented, achieving full inclusion of Venezuelan women in the Bolivarian National Armed Forces (FANB) and in all the military academies, where 26% of new graduates are women. Carmen Melendez, first female Admiral of Venezuela, states that this inclusion was made without any kind of discrimination, and that within ten years, the country will have a women's participation rate of 50% or more in the FANB (RNV 2012). All four components of FANB – the Air Force, the Army, the Navy and the National Guard – have already fully included women and promoted gender equality. (Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Comunicación y la Formulación 2010).

The female presence in the Armed Forces of **Brazil** has been growing considerably, even though it is still a very masculinized field, since women's participation in the Brazilian military has only been allowed since 1980. Nowadays, female forces are almost 7% of the country's total, which adds up to more than 22.000 women in the field – (Portal Brasil 2014). The Brazilian Navy was the first Force in the country to accept female participation, 33 years ago, and is also the only one that has a female officer-general. The Air Force is the one that concentrates most women in the military field: during the last 10 years, female presence in this force has increased over 150% (Agência Força Aérea 2012). The presence of women in the Army has been expanding too, especially due to the Federal Law number 12.705, sanctioned in 2012 by President Dilma Rousseff – the first female president of the country (Portal Brasil 2014). Even so, compared to the female population of Brazil, and taking into consideration that this is the most developed and powerful country in Latin America, a Security Sector Reform is clearly needed in Brazil. The Brazilian government states that there has to be done more to ensure that women are active participants in peace agreements and in the negotiation, design and implementation of post-conflict and peacebuilding arrangements, through the empowerment of women, via an effective SSR (Brazil 2014).

Chile states that Security Sector Reform processes must be inclusive, ensuring the participation of women both in policy discussion and formulation and in its subsequent implementation (Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations 2014). Since 1995 women have participated in the Chilean military, although with

very restricted and limited roles until 2003, when they conquered the same rights as their male counterparts, having no disadvantages at any level (The Washington Times 2004). The transformation of Chile's military was championed by Michelle Bachelet, who was then the first Chilean female Defense Minister and is now president of the country for the second time. In 2005, Chile was already considered a model in Latin America for this matter: 15% of its soldiers, 1 in 5 new Army officers in training and 1 in 3 students in military aviation colleges were already women (Ross 2005). After the UN Security Council approved Resolution 1325, Chile developed Action Plans to ensure its implementation, becoming the 10th country in the world to generate a second-stage document on women, peace, and security. Also since then female Chilean Soldiers have been playing key roles in United Nations peacekeeping missions (Pelcastre 2015).

Mexico's Security Sector is itself fragile and its weakness increases daily, especially due to the internal armed conflict involving the militarization of drug cartels. Besides that, Mexico's SS is a very masculinized field, which makes a Reform process in the country even more necessary. In that order, Resolution 1325 is, according to Mexico, the key to a more female inclusive reform, and that is why this country has been pushing forward a review of its legal framework to ensure the country is in line with the document. However, the Resolution itself is ineffective, which makes it important to the international community to approve measures similar to the UNSC Resolution 2122 (2013), that complements Resolution 1325, aiming to strengthen women's role in all stages of conflict prevention, resolution and recovery (Mexico 2013). In this purpose, at an internal level, Mexico has been educating its armed forces on women's rights, has proposed an initiative to the legislature aimed at ensuring women's equitable representation in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, and is striving to increase the number of women on the lists of candidates for high-level posts (Mexico 2014). For the Mexican government it is crucial not only that women take part in the processes of reform of the security and justice systems but that they are also full participants in those systems once they are reformed, and for this to happen, a Security Sector Reform must be implemented (Mexico 2013).

Women have gradually been incorporated in the **United States of America's** Military throughout its history. Nowadays they represent about 15% of the active-duty force. That number comprises about 74,000 women in the Army, 53,000 in the Navy, 62,000 in the Air Force and 14,000 in the Marine Corps. The country partially allows female participation in combat roles: enlisted women made up 2.7% of the military's front-line units. Women were barred from the infantry, but were allowed to serve on gun crews, air crews and in seamanship specialties (CNN 2013). There is still a lot more for women to conquer in the North-American Armed For-

es, which is why SSR is still extremely important in this country, one of the most influential of the world when it comes to security and military power. Furthermore, the United States is one of the few countries in the world that has not ratified the CEDAW yet – United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, ratified by 187 countries –. North America's position towards the subjects is not uniform: some people claim that Ratifying CEDAW would affirm the United States as a leader in promoting equality for women everywhere; otherwise the ones against the ratification defend that CEDAW is contrary to America's constitutional system, that it is ineffective and that it would deny American women's freedom (Bamrah 2014) (Wright 2010). President Obama has showed that, in theory, he is very friendly to CEDAW, but has not made any efforts to ratify it; Secretary of State Hilary Clinton has also clearly said that CEDAW should be ratified by the U.S. – as the number one runner for next presidential elections, there are a few chances for CEDAW to be ratified in a short future (Lowen 2015).

The **United Kingdom** is one of the biggest defenders of SSR processes around the world. Nowadays the State allows women to join the British Armed Forces in all roles, including combat roles such as fighter pilots, except those whose primary duty is to close with and kill the enemy (Fisher 2013). SSR will continue to be implemented in the country: UK's Defence Secretary has stated that plans on allowing women to hold combat roles in British Army by 2016. Affirming that women can fight just as effectively as men, Defence Secretary Michael Fallon has declared himself against the restriction of women to entry into any branch of the armed forces, and commits to direct his efforts to reform the SS in this matter (Weaver 2014).

Germany is one of the few countries in the world that allow women to participate in every position in the Armed Forces, including all types of front-line combat positions (Fisher 2013). Women first joined German combat units in the year of 2001, and since then the SSR process in the country has continued, increasing the number of women in combat positions. Even so, female soldiers represent only nearly 10% of the total, which is a very low number for a country that allows women to be in every branch of the Military (Dowling 2012). According to recent surveys of the Federal Ministry of Defence, which aimed to investigate how well women are integrated in the army, only 57.3 percent of women serving in the German Armed Forces say they would choose their job again, and only 34.6 percent said they would recommend this path to a female friend. This is because many women still find integration difficult and the working environment hostile (Marx 2014). The German Army, for example, has only one female general; this made the country's Defence Minister, Ursula von der Leyen, declare that the army must introduce quotas to boost the number of female officers. Von der Leyen also wishes to make the armed

forces more appealing to women in the next years, which proves that, even though the country has made several improvements in the Armed Forces lately, there still has to be done a lot more, and the SSR German process must go on (Huggler 2015).

France is also one of the few countries in the world that allows women to be in front-line combat positions (Fisher 2013). The country has the highest proportions of female military personnel in Europe: women are 11% of the Army, 13% of the Navy, 21% of the Air Force and 50% of the Medical Corps, representing around 15% of all service personnel in the combined branches of the French Military (Ministère de la Défense 2011). France states that SSR has to respond to the security needs of the society as a whole, including women, which should be encouraged to take an active part in decision-making at all levels of SSR, ensuring that women are equally represented in both civilian and military forces (Ministère des Affaires Étrangères; Ministère de la Défense 2008). Even so, women still face difficulties in being fully integrated to the Military, such as aggression and sexual violence, which made French Defence Minister, Jean-Yves Le Drian, announce ten measures to combat sexual aggression in the armed forces. Situations such as that still represent obstacles to full integration of women in the Armed Forces; this means that SSR process in the country still has to be better implement for women to enjoy gender equality in the French Military (Lichfield 2014).

In **Spain**, the first women joined the army in 1941; after that, female participation in the Spanish Military has gradually increased. In 1989, Act 17/1989 extended the incorporation of women to all corps and grades in all three armed services, although there were a few specific regulations and limitations for that. Ten years later, Act 17/1999 removed every sex distinctions in posting, achieving full integration of women in Spain's Armed Forces. Today, women in Spain can join all corps and grades, including combat roles, and carve out a professional career, technically just like a man (Rodríguez 2013). Despite that, after 25 years of integration in the military force, women are still being discriminated, and the number of female recruits in the armed forces has remained stable at around 12 percent (Hierro e González 2013). Also, there are still some units where women are underrepresented and even some which no woman has yet joined. A conclusion that can be drawn is that, even though Spanish Armed Forces have been opened to incorporate women, SSR is still needed to guarantee full female incorporation and extinguish gender inequality in the Spanish Military (Hierro e González 2013).

Since it began its transition to democracy and recovery from a decade of conflicts, **Serbia** has made considerable efforts to reform its security sector. Although gender mainstreaming was initially not recognized as a part of SSR, some positive developments on this matter occurred in 2002, when the police force started to

recruit more women. In 2007, The Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence initiated a project to increase the visibility of women in the security sector and strengthen their engagement in its reform, with an emphasis on the implementation of UNSC Resolution 132 (SIPRI 2008). In 2009 and 2010, Serbia adopted basic gender mainstreaming policies, such as the National Strategy on the Improvement of the Position of Women and the Promotion of Gender Equality, and the National Action Plan (NAP) to implement UNSC Resolution 1325; these policies stated that women are not only victims of war and violence, but they can also be participants of the conflict and negotiators in peace agreements, and an emphasis was given on participation and inclusion of women in decision-making in the security sector. Serbia's national gender mechanisms at the executive level consist of the Gender Equality Council – an advisory body tasked to monitor and improve gender mainstreaming within the Government's line ministries –, and the Gender Equality Directorate – responsible for the coordination of gender policies within the executive (Stajonovic & Quesada 2010).

At present, the security institutions of **Bosnia and Herzegovina** base their practices on a legislation that, apart from proclaiming non-discrimination in general, does not address gender-specific issues such as sexual harassment, gender-based discrimination, and employment quotas on the institutional level. The country's first gender equality institution, the Gender Centre of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, began its work at the end of 2000, and was followed by the Law on Gender Equality (which deals with gender discrimination and was approved in 2003) and by the Agency for Gender Equality (2004). Bosnia and Herzegovina has also been the first country in the Balkans to adopt an Action Plan on Implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325, doing so in July 2010 and renewing it for the period of 2014-2017. Furthermore, the Law on Service in the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina states specifically in Article 28 that any discrimination on the ground of sex or other aspects of identity must be avoided in the recruitment process. Nevertheless, by 2011, out of 536 women employed with the country's Armed Forces, 55 (5.8%) were officers, 124 were non-commissioned officers, 199 were soldiers, and 158 were civil servants. Despite the country's efforts, women are still marginalized, having little access to power or to the forums where policies are created and decisions and reforms are made (Bosnia & Herzegovina 2013).

Between 2005 and 2007, **Hungary** raised the participation of women in its armed forces from 4.3 per cent to around 17.56 per cent, achieving the second highest rate of female participation amongst NATO countries. Since the approval of the Hungarian Military Service Law (1996), combat positions have been opened to women, and women are allowed to occupy all positions within the armed forces. The Law also stated equal rights for men and women, specified that the eligibility

requirements for employment must be the same for both sexes, and guaranteed non-discriminatory promotion based on professional skills, experience, performance, and service time. Additionally, in 2003, the country established a Committee on Women of the Hungarian Defense Forces, with the purpose of ensuring equal opportunities for men and women in the defense forces through research, analysis and policy recommendations. Members of the Committee are assigned by the leadership of the Ministry of Defense and the Hungarian Defense Forces, and represent all the female personnel serving in organizations and units of the Hungarian Defense Forces. Lastly, in 2005, Hungary created a team for the Program on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, designed to prospective members of the EU. Today, Hungarian women work and train together with their male counter-parts, and are subject to the same chain of command, standards of performance and discipline; servicewomen are entitled to maternity leave, and changes have also been made to include gender issues, such as sexual exploitation and abuse, and culturally-specific information about women (DCAF 2009; Krizsan & Pap 2005).

In the last 15 years, **Turkey** has been slowly changing its legislation and making initiatives to allow and encourage women's participation in all spheres of the state. The Civil Code has been changed in order to equalize the treatment of women, opening opportunities for them in many sectors, including the ones related to security. However, the alterations in legislation still face a gap in their translation to practical ways. Female political representation and decision-making is still scarce, and the participation of women in peace-building only happens by means of NGOs (Keskin 1997; Murphy & Vibe 2013).

Even though the situation in the **Russian Federation** has been improving in the last years, the country has still a big gap between male and female leadership and representation: for example, women currently take only 6% of the political seats. In 2013, there were around 29,000 women serving the Russian Armed Forces, but only 3.5 percent of them served in command posts; the remainder functioned in posts such as staff workers, medical and financial specialists, or in the communications troops. Moreover, there were around 900 female officers that had completed training in the military faculties of civilian institutions of higher education, 8,300 women who served as warrant officers, and approximately 19,000 women serving on contracts as soldiers and sergeants. However, the numbers of women serving in the Armed Forces is in decline since 2007. Furthermore, opinion polls carried out in 2013 suggested that many young women would like to join the military, but Russian society appeared to oppose any move to extend the draft to include women: figures from the Levada Center suggested only 4 percent of Russians believed that service in the Armed Forces should be obligatory for women (Russia Beyond the Headlines 2013; The Jamestown Foundation 2013).

China expresses the importance of gender equality and the empowerment

of women, reiterating their unique role in the areas of peace and security (China 2015). The country states how crucial it is to facilitate women's full participation in decision-making and in processes of prevention and resolution of conflicts. According to the Chinese government, women should play active roles in mediation and negotiation, always seeking solutions to conflicts. Moreover, they play essential peacekeeping roles and are indispensable for the implementation of peacebuilding processes (China 2013). Nevertheless China does not agree with female participation in the military for combat roles: the country only allows women soldiers to serve in traditional female roles or in military support positions. Nowadays, women only comprise about 7.5% of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), and the Chinese government does not have any intentions to change this scenario with any kind of intensive SSR. It is unlikely that women will be incorporated into the Chinese armed forces in larger numbers or with expanded roles - at least not until they have achieved greater equality in other areas of life, or if there happens to be a national crisis that creates a shortage of men qualified for military service (Li 1994).

When **Japan's** Armed Forces, known as Japan Self-Defence Forces, were originally formed, women were recruited exclusively for nursing services. SSR has been implemented since then: by the year of 1991, more than 6,000 women were in the Military, occupying all service areas except those requiring direct exposure to combat. Two years ago, for the first time, female officers were allowed to be in the frontline, commanding two naval destroyers (Spitzer 2013), which shows that, even though the process of SSR in the country has been slow, it is actually effecting change. Japan intends to ensure women's participation and the incorporation of female perspectives into every phase of conflict prevention, conflict settlement and peacebuilding (Japan 2013).

Women officers have served in **India's** armed forces for 88 years – most of them being in the nursing and medical branches until now. But after all these years, the number of female military officers remains next to 5,4% of the country's total. The biggest issue is that women are only hired under what are called “short service commissions” that last ten years (Mallapur 2015). The debate about granting permanent commissions to all non-combat and combat branches has been going slowly: India's government states that they do not subscribe to the view that women should form part of the military component, since women becoming a part of military culture would serve no useful purpose. The government reiterates, though, that women can play an important role in policing functions: India was the first State to successfully deploy an all-women police force as part of United Nations peacekeeping operations in Liberia. The country stands for the equal participation of women in power structures, occupying positions of influence, and for full involvement in all efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts as essential to the maintenance and promo-

tion of peace and security (India 2014).

Indonesia's government reinforces the country's goal to make gender equality and the empowerment of women, and its commitment to ensuring women's participation at all levels of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding (Indonesia 2013). Since 1992, Indonesian Armed Forces have formed small all-female corps: the Women's Army Corps, the Navy Women's Corps, the Air Force Women's Corps, and the Women's Corps of the Police. However, according to one of the highest representatives of the Military, these units are expected "not to forget their female nature" – they are assigned to administrative roles, teaching foreign languages and working on improving health and social conditions of armed forces members, but are not allowed to join the combat services (Timur 2011). In Indonesia there are also certain limitations for women in terms of gaining an education, such as enrolling at Military Academies. Furthermore to join the Military or National Police - and even to marry military officers -, women are obligated to take virginity tests, which have been considered primitive, invasive, unscientific and discriminatory by the Human Rights Watch (McDermott 2015). Even though, Indonesia's top military commander has defended the practice, arguing that there's no other way to measure female morality (Neuman 2015).

Women have played important roles in **Vietnam's** history, serving as warriors and nurses and taking leadership positions aiming at redefining female's reality in the country, especially after the Vietnam War – lately Vietnamese women have enjoyed increased representation in policy-making and legislative processes and in senior leadership positions (UNGA 2014). They have played a significant role in defending Vietnam during the Indochina Wars, being enlisted in both the North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong Guerrilla insurgent force in the South. The Vietnamese Government states that lately Vietnamese women have enjoyed increased representation in policy-making and legislative processes and in senior leadership positions (UNGA 2014). The country has established several national programs toward gender equality, such as the National Strategy for Gender Equality (2011-2020), the National Program for Gender Equality (2011-2015) and the Gender Equality Law, enacted in 2006 (Viet Nam 2012). They also defend enhancing female participation in peacebuilding and increasing their involvement in all stages of peace processes. Even so, the country does not subscribe to any debates of SSR in terms of allowing women to take combat roles (Vietnam 2010).

Pakistan has already implemented SSR in 1947, after the country's establishment. Since then, women have been serving in the Military, being known as "The Women in the Pakistan Armed Forces". Currently there are more than 4,000 women serving in the Military, most of them in areas such as the military logistics, staff development and senior administrative officers, but the country has also partially allowed women to be in combat roles, which is the case of the female fighter

pilots of the PAF, permitted to fly combat aircraft (Mallapur 2015). The country reinforces that women are not merely victims of conflicts, but are the most potent agents of change in situations of armed conflicts: their involvement in peacebuilding can make a real difference in efforts to contain conflict, and they can play crucial roles at every stage of conflict resolution, such as peace negotiation, peacebuilding, peacekeeping and in transitional justice systems (Pakistan 2014).

Timor-Leste's government affirms that women have a valuable contribution in the areas of politics and peacebuilding, and has been making efforts to extinguish gender inequality – an example is the plebiscite to increase female participation in election processes: in 2012, women's representation in the Parliament increased from 29% to almost 40% (Timor-Leste 2012). Nonetheless, the country does not seem to be making any other bigger effort when it comes to SSR; after women participation was allowed in the Armed Forces of Timor-Leste, in the year of 2001, only few women have joined it – in 2010 only 7% of new recruits were female, and this number has not suffered considerable changes since then (UNMIT 2006).

Women's Organizations like the Afghan Women Network (AWN) are responsible for most of the recent achievements seen in **Afghanistan**. The organizations promote laws, policies and programs that favor and improve women's rights. Recently, parliamentary quotas have been established seeking an increase in the participation of women in politics and a Ministry of Women's Affairs was created. However, while female members of Parliament are often invited to meetings to talk about the situation of women, topics like public finance, security or terrorism are rarely discussed (DCAF 2011). In 2010, Afghanistan's army got its first female officers in decades, when 29 women graduated in a class of new recruits from the Afghan National Army (ANA).

In the **Islamic State of Iran** the current status of women is also non-favorable, especially when regarded to political positions and representativeness. Although, in the last 30 years, there was a growth of 350% in the number of women in the parliament, and an increase in women's seats in the Islamic Consultative Assembly from 0.86% to 3.14%, the numbers are still relatively low even for the region. The country, in addition, lacks on any legislation that allows women to take a decision-making position in politics, and also doesn't have actual incentives for female military and peace-building operations (Shojaei, Samsu & Asayeseh 2010; Iran 2012).

Currently, not only has **Iraq** faced issues on protecting women during armed conflicts, but also it has been one of the countries with less female representation in the region. During the last government (2010–2014), the country had only one female state minister, out of 33 ministers; there is also a quota for women of 25% in Iraq's parliament, although these women are not allowed to participate in negotiations between political parties and on national security issues. Therefore, although there are indeed Iraqi women in the military, there is still no female representatives

in a decision-making level, authorized of making security-related decisions (The Institute for Inclusive Security 2014; WPP 2015).

Israel is one of the few countries that has legislation related to the participation of women in the security sector. In late 2004, two members of Knesset (Israel's Parliament), in collaboration with women's organizations, campaigned for amendments to the 1956 Equal Representation of Women law. Those amendments consisted of the inclusion of women – in teams appointed by the Parliament – in the making and managing of domestic, foreign and security policies, besides the conduction of peace negotiations. Creating the law, however, is only the beginning of a long process, and its implementation has to be monitored. Moreover, the integration of women into the armed forces has constituted one of the government's main strategies for gender equality. However, while women make up 33 per cent of officers in the lower ranks, and 21 per cent of Captains and Majors, they still occupy only 3 per cent of the most senior ranks (DCAF, 2011).

Qatar has also been engaged in increasing women participation in the security sector, especially regarding the prevention of conflicts and peace-building. In the last years, the country has been engaged in creating initiatives that enabling women to play their full role in parliamentary and political fields, assuring political representation and leadership roles to women in public sectors. Laws aiming to protect women during armed conflicts and special measures of protection from gender-based violence in war have also been recently implemented (Qatar 2013; UNSC 2014).

In the Middle East and Arabic region, the **United Arab Emirates** has been ranked as one of the main leaders in gender equality nowadays. Since the beginning of the 21st century, a series of public and private sector initiatives has been made in order to increase and strength-en women's roles in business, in the military and in the government. On the security matter, UAE opened its first military college for women in 2014, the Khawla bint Al Azwar Military School. The opening of the school has as an objective the substantial increase of women in the military sector in the next decade. The country already counts with several women in leader-ship positions, filling two-thirds of the public sector posts, and a percentage of 30% in senior and decision-making positions (Fyfe 2013; UAE 2014).

Currently, in the Central African Republic, due to a set of violent acts, women are not having the chance to be truly represented or protected politically and militarily. Even before the conflicts, the country did not have any quotas for female representativeness, having a low number of female politicians – only 13% of the seats were held by women in 2012 (World Bank 2015; Musau 2015).

Liberia has created a Women's NGO Secretariat to coordinate women's organizations in the country. The organizations main goals are ensuring that women are able to participate equally in the Liberian society, and also benefit equally from decision-making processes at all levels. With over 50 members, the Secretariat has

been active in SSR initiatives and is a member of the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (SSR Resource Center 2014). In the country since 2003, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has been an aid to the reform of the Liberian National Police (LNP), especially where it involves women. A 20 per cent quota for women's inclusion in the police and armed forces was set and a Female Recruitment Programme created. The Programme selects women to attend classes to receive their high school diplomas in return for a number of years of service in the LNP (DCAF 2011).

In **Nigeria**, female representation has been a major issue. While the country has more than 60% of its population comprised of women, less than 20% of the political offices are held by them. Nigerian female politicians are also hardly allowed to participate in international and security decisions; and even if they are included, they are not in a position of leadership. Positive news is that the number of women participating in peace-building operations is rising within the country. However, the tentative numbers are still far away from the efforts shown in other countries in the region (Esidene & Abdul 2013; The Guardian 2015).

Rwanda is the number 1 country in the world with most of its political system made of women representatives – 64% of the seats in the country are held by women. This female leadership cannot be only seen in politics, but also in all sectors of the society – the Rwandese army has a significant number of women on it, and peace-building operations are usually leaded by women. The importance of these facts reflects on the reality of the country: Rwanda has been one of the fastest countries to recover from war and genocide in the African continent (New Security Beat 2014; Tafirenyika 2015).

Currently, **Sierra Leone** is one of the countries with the lowest female representative-ness in politics – in the 2007 elections, only 16 of the 124 members of the parliament were women. As for leadership positions, there were only 2 (out of 24) female ministers. The number of women seated in the local political councils is higher, but still not high enough. Since 2002, peace-building operations have made women more aware of the need of political representation, especially after the war. However, the political and party system in the country are still not very open to female politicians (The Guardian 2012; Castillejo 2009).

In 1994, **South Africa** underwent a transition from authoritarian to democratic rule; in this vastly changed environment, emerged a notion that defense had to fundamentally change to align itself with the new reality of the country. Women made significant contributions to this defense reform process in South Africa. As a result, since 1994, affirmative action was instituted as a policy, equal opportunity programs were established, the right of women to serve in all ranks and positions, including combat roles, was affirmed, and a policy directive which called for a “non-sexist, and non-discriminatory institutional culture” for the new armed forces

was adopted. The South African Department of Defense stated its commitment to over-come gender discrimination and increase representation, and the Ministry of Defense created mechanisms that helped gender integration, such as the Gender Focal Point, the Gender Forum, and the Gender Sensitization Programs to raise awareness and understanding of gender policies. In addition, the Deputy Defense Minister annually hosted the “Women at the Peace Table”, a gathering of women in the armed forces and in civil society to explore and address peace and security issues. Within the Defense Forces, policies that focused on increased re-cruitment and promotion of women to all levels and in every structure, joint and equal training for both men and women, and gender education and training were implemented. As a result of these measures and mechanisms, in 2006 women made up 23.8 per cent of the Defense Forces and 11.6 per cent of its top management structure, and 22.8 per cent of the Ministry of Defense’s employees were women. It is also important to notice that South Africa was one of the nations with most female representatives in the first decade of the 21st century – however, these numbers have been decreasing in the last years: for a country that once had 55% of women premiers, the current 22% is considerably lower (DCAF 2009).

In **Zimbabwe** the growth of women representation can also be easily seen – in the last elections, in 2013, 35% of the elected politicians were women. The results presented a huge difference from the previous elections, in 2008, when only 17% of the elected were women. The change was possible because the country adopted the system of quotas in its Constitution, which now states that at least 30% of the seats must be filled with female representatives. However, the discussion of the roles of women in the security sector and war is somewhat tabooed since the Liberation War that occurred over 30 years ago. Not much has been written about female combatants’ experiences in the war or about their treatment, since rape is an especially sensitive topic. However, it is known that female combatants that returned from the war faced a society that did not welcome the freedoms they had known. At home, they found men and in-laws ready to label them murderers or prostitutes, while their male comrades were deemed “heroes.” The debate about these issues is extremely important to the advancement of women in the security sector (IDASA 2010; UN Women 2013).

5 QUESTIONS TO PONDER

1. How important is women’s “security” for security politics?
2. How is it possible to increase the presence of women in the securitarian arena?
3. Are participation quotas for women the solution?

4. What are the major threats to the security of women today?
5. What are the practical solutions for the much centered in theory debate on gender and security?

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UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
COUNCIL

URBAN DEVELOPMENT: CONSEQUENCES TO THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE HOUSING

André França¹
Diego Bortoli²

ABSTRACT

As Global South face steady economic growth and the world becomes ever more urban, human condition (and so, human rights) cannot be decontextualized from urban condition. Historically, city development has marginalized the most socially fragile groups – and nowadays' projects are no exception. Symbolizing economic growth and attraction of investments for international appeal, urban development projects (UDPs) have displaced millions of people, whether by forced evictions or economic exclusion, degrading their access to jobs, sanitation and public services, in general. Internationally agreed basic housing rights have been largely violated, in both developed and developing countries, despite continuous efforts by United Nation's agencies and growing media attention to the topic. Capitalizing on the plethora of different experiences and challenges, new approaches for enhancing urban conditions and, at the same time, advancing adequate housing rights are a common task for the members of the Human Right's Council.

¹ André is a final year student of International Relations at UFRGS and director at UNHRC

² Diego is a first year student of International Relations at UFRGS and assistant director at UNHRC

1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Urban form is a direct outcome of the ways in which different societies are organized. In an unequal world, therefore, it is not surprising that cities should also be unequal (Gilbert and Gugler 1982, 11).

Nowadays, 54 percent of the global population lives in urban settlements, a trend that tends to expand: by 2045, the number of people living in cities will reach 6 billion, increasing in 2 billion the number of urban residents (World Bank 2015). The pace of urban growth is especially fast in developing countries of the Global South: a recent report by the United Nations estimates that by 2030, the Global South will concentrate as much as 81 percent of the world's urban population. It is clear that the urban condition is progressively becoming a synonym to the human condition (Archer, *The City: The Basics* 2013).

Most cities have undergone a rapid and vertiginous growth that led to substantial changes to the urban landscape. Modern and audacious urban projects have taken place as expressions of this unforeseen growth – often providing cities with job opportunities, investments and wealth. The aspects of such mass urbanization – among which the urban development projects (UDPs) –, though, have somewhat had a degrading impact on basic human rights, particularly those linked to housing conditions (Human Rights Advocates 2012).

1.1 URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN A WORLD SYSTEM

Once most of humankind stopped being predominantly hunters and gatherers, cities have become part of the world. The Western urbanization may be understood as part of the transformations set by the European agricultural and commercial revolution during the so-called Renaissance. This period – from 1250 onwards – was a turning point when it comes to the nature of city development. Cities began to erupt on a regular basis first throughout Europe and then in the non-Western world due to European exploration and domination. The evolution and expansion of cities after the Renaissance, unlike earlier cities, was more a consequence of changes in the economic life of countries than of religious or political reasons. The Western imperialism, after 1492, forged a world system of economic development centered in Europe, and cities around the world were either developed or reoriented in order to facilitate the functioning of this system as a whole (Archer, *The City: The Basics* 2013).

Contemporary city life, both in Global South and North, respectively Pe-

riphery and Center of the system, reflects this historical dissemination of Western economic dominance. Indeed, Manuel Castells argues, the economies of cities in the Global South remain in a neocolonial relationship with the still Western-dominated world system, which continues to inhibit their development even after imperial relations have ceased to exist (Castells 1977). Nonetheless, globalization processes have permitted many southern cities to prosper and undergo economic transformation, particularly through investments from Center that flow into Periphery, such as Brazil, India, China and South Africa. Manufacturing enterprises, as well as professional services, have increasingly off-shored their activities as an outcome of global competition, providing the major peripheral urban centers with facilities that once could only be found in developed countries. Accordingly, many urban problems that rise nowadays are more associated with a city-based global culture, rather than with North-South disparities, as major cities around the world are becoming progressively alike in their built and social environments (Archer, *The City: The Basics* 2013).

1.2 GREAT DEVELOPMENT PLANS

It has never been more imperative for cities to express the values and signs that constitute their personality as in the present days of global economic competition. Image creation is one of the processes fostered by an entrepreneurial alliance forged between progressive politicians and local elites to address the effects of globalization. It relies on the enhancement of local features that make the cities stand out among competitors by revitalizing strategic areas with perceived economic significance. Among the tools used to increase the cities visibility and at the same time provide the financial resources necessary for urban regeneration are the beautification processes and the hosting of mega-events (Silvestre, *The Social Impacts of Mega-Events: Towards a Framework* 2008).

1.2.1 HAUSSMANNISM AND CITY IMAGE

Beautification process dates back, at least, to Haussmann's renovation of Paris, the milestone of this sort of urban renovation. The Haussmannization of Paris took place during the time of Napoleon III, under the direction of Georges-Eugène Haussmann, who completely remodeled Paris between 1853 and 1870 in order to better meet the growing social and environmental needs of the industrializing city. Previously to that moment, the city's infrastructure remained in the unplanned arrangement of earlier times and had been overwhelmed by an

ever-growing population, which rendered Paris overpopulated, congested, filthy, and crime and disease ridden. Haussmann created a modern street network – the grand boulevard fashion – that crisscrossed the city, making it easier for the military and police to access the entire city to enforce social order, particularly in overpopulated slum areas (Benevolo 1980). In addition, Haussmann's plans included the construction of parks and squares, the annexation of the suburbs surrounding Paris, and the construction of new sewers, fountains and aqueducts. His gigantic building projects, though, were blamed for the subsequent social disruption: thousands of families and businesses had to be relocated when their buildings were demolished for the construction of the new boulevards. Haussmann was also blamed for the dramatic increase in rents, as the amount of housing available for low-income families was systematically reduced, forcing low-income Parisians to move from the center to the outer neighborhoods of the city, where rents were lower (Moncan, *Le Paris d'Haussmann* 2009).

Indeed, the aspects of Haussmannism provided a longstanding and emulated paradigm for modern city planning throughout the world. In the mid-twentieth century, for instance, Haussmann inspired Robert Moses, who proposed and partially implemented an ambitious restructuring of New York City's civil service system. The manipulation of the built environment has consolidated the environmental determinism, under the erroneous but widespread belief that city problems are the result of city ambiance and arrangement instead of how cities are developed and by whom. City planning then centered on the creation of parks, new civic architecture and symbolic buildings and other built amenities in order to render cities beautiful and more pleasing to the eye. The attention of planners is, therefore, drawn away from the true cases of city problems as their focus is put singularly on the built environment as the means to improve city life and to create a better image of the entire city – mostly to attract and maintain city elites and businesses (Archer, *The City: The Basics* 2013).

In the contemporary times, and as never before, cities need to appear to be innovative, stimulating, creative and safe to live, to visit and also to consume. In this context, the urban entrepreneurship involves a certain type of interurban competition, in which every city and region aims to have advantage in relation to the others. As a consequence, there is a proliferation of management practices that seek to promote speculative projects to attract capital with emphasis on tourism, production and consumption of cultural and sporting events (Harvey 2007).

Governments compete with each other “in the hopes of ‘remaking’ their cities by creating new transportation, communication, transport, tourist, and sporting infrastructure, increasing tourism, providing temporary jobs, and marketing

the city or country to attract global capital” (Gaffney 2010, 26). The process of bidding illustrates the international inter-urban competition for investment, recognition, and business that characterizes the modern urban policy: until 1992, the number of bidding cities to host one of the most prestigious sporting mega-event, the Olympic Games, remained below twelve. However, the Games of 2004 received forty-eight bids (Chalkley and Essex, *Urban Development Through Hosting International Events: a History of the Olympic Games* 1999).

1.2.2. URBAN BOOSTERISM AND THE HOSTING OF MEGA-EVENTS

Mechanisms employed to “estheticize” and reshape an attractive urban landscape have become multifunctional in recent years due to tourism, culture, entertainment and sports-led projects. They have the potential to boost the city’s positioning as a consumption-oriented economic space. The physical expression of these initiatives can be observed in renovated symbolic buildings, redeveloped waterfront areas, cultural quarters, shopping and entertainment complexes, sports facilities, iconic landmarks, and mixed-use areas of office towers, residential blocks and retailing facilities (Beioley 2002) (Judd and Fainstein 1999). Particularly in the scenario of mega-events, such projects have been adopted and executed in a vertiginous way and in a relatively short-time period.

Mega-events, also referred to as “hallmark” or “landmark” events, are large-scale events intended to renew investment in host cities by projecting a positive image of the city (Ritchie, *Assessing the Impact of Hallmark Events: Conceptual and Research Issues* 1984). These events are usually cultural and sports-related, like the international Expo, the European City of Culture, sports World Cups, racing Grand Prix, and fore mostly, the Olympic Games. British sociologist Maurice Roche has laid out the critical characteristics that define mega-events:

Mega-events (large scale leisure and tourism events such as Olympic Games and World Fairs) are short-term events with long-term consequences for the cities that stage them. They are associated with the creation of infrastructure and event facilities often carrying long-term debts and always requiring long-term use programming. In addition, if successful, they project a new (or renewed) and perhaps persistent and positive image and identity for the host city through national and international media, particularly TV, coverage. This is usually assumed to have long-term positive consequences in terms of tourism, industrial relocation, and inward investments (Roche 1994, 1-2).

Mega-events are progressively used as a form of revitalizing depressed post-

industrial city centers. As cities moved towards a service-based economy, a new approach towards guaranteeing their role and influence in a globalized world has been necessary. The most plausible explanations for the increasing popularity of mega-events situate them within the ambience of inter-city competition for capital in a postmodern, global marketplace (Silvestre, *The Social Impacts of Mega-Events: Towards a Framework* 2008). The increasing number of cities from different economic spectrums bidding for mega-events corroborates their prominence in the urban agenda. Moreover, it demonstrates the bidding city adherence “to a set of (globally defined) competitive rules” (Cochrane, Peck and Tickell, *Manchester Plays Games: Exploring the Local Politics of Globalisation* 1996).

Nonetheless, the planning complexity and great urban intervention associated with the preparation for a mega-event is correlated with substantial costs for the host community. In addition, as Cox (1996, 7) argues, hallmark events have a “repeated tendency to show the bad sides of the cities, as well as having a range of negative effects” that, as Chalkey and Essex (1999, 391) expose, “might overshadow or marginalize the needs of local people”.

1.3. IMPACT ON ADEQUATE HOUSING

Every time city land was utilized for the construction of a new boulevard, memorial square or park, civic building in the process of beautification, or to give space to a hallmark event, housing the ever-growing numbers of low-income people gradually became a quite challenging task. Furthermore, based on the principle that planners should guarantee the “highest and best use” of land, policymakers are expected to facilitate the development of any given parcel of land at its highest exchange value, maximizing profits to the owner. The exchange value of land is mainly determined by its location. Central locations generally yield higher land values, and land values tend to increase incrementally (Angotti 1999). As a result, slum-dwellers, who are often set in strategic areas for the real estate market, are forced, directly or indirectly, to displace.

At first, private volunteering attempted to ameliorate this situation as philanthropists built up early versions of public housing, and health workers attempted to provide professional assistance to slum-dwellers. However, the growing magnitude of the problem in most industrialized cities, aggravated by the aforementioned rises in land values, soon rendered these efforts insufficient and extra-local government agencies were forced to step in to address such an alarming public problem (Archer, *The City: The Basics* 2013). For this reason, providing adequate housing for the urban masses has ultimately turned into a major concern

to modern city planning. In Europe, nowadays, a great part of such housing is constructed and managed through public spending and management. Particularly in the post-World War II scenario, the devastation prompted the necessity of housing reconstruction on a massive scale, what justifies the more uniform physical appearance that the former European slum neighborhoods took on (Archer, *The City: The Basics* 2013).

The case of sporting mega-events particularly illustrates the “highest and best use” of land metaphor, because local authorities are interested in the financial returns and recognition that the Games will bring to the host nation. Thus, they facilitate even more the development of any parcel at its highest exchange value, usually by international companies that are willing to invest large sum of money to build mega-projects in places considered strategic to generate the maximum profit (Andranovich, Burbank and Heying 2001). Interventions in the urban landscape derived from new venues and their related infrastructure, notwithstanding, intrinsically involve displacement, which may assume the forms of forced evictions or the so-called process of gentrification (Silvestre, *The Social Impacts of Mega-Events: Towards a Framework* 2008), issues that will be addressed in more detail in the next section.

One striking example was the Barcelona Olympic Village – constructed for the 1992 Games – in the Poblenou district. A former obsolete industrial site was revitalized and transformed in a middle- and upper-class neighborhood. Former working-class residents and prosperous small business were evicted and forced to migrate to other locations. The occupation of the new residences brought about an increase of almost 50% in the population of the district. This economic opportunity attracted businesses to serve the new residents – i.e. shops, restaurants, entertainment complexes, and offices—amounting to a gentrification process. Adjacent areas were also affected by the increasing speculation in rent and real-estate prices and the rise in the local cost of living, forcing residents to relocate (Silvestre, *The Social Impacts of Mega-Events: Towards a Framework* 2008). During the seven-year period prior to the Olympics, housing prices in the city rose in more than 250%, while 59,000 people left the city (Ferran, *The economy of the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games* 1993).

A notable constraint on tackling housing problems is that the people who are often most impacted by mega-events are the least able to form community groups and protect their interests. In the case of Rio de Janeiro, the way local authorities are dealing with the existence of lower class and informal settlements in areas of interest to the economic agents that are producing the facilities that will host the Olympics in 2016 is the appropriation of their land (Ribeiro and

Santos Junior 2013). The construction of the Olympic Stadium in a working-class neighborhood in the city, for instance, was marked by community disturbance and public neglect. Neither detailed information on the planned works and possible implications, nor assistance for reallocation, were provided to local residents (Silvestre, *The Social Impacts of Mega-Events: Towards a Framework* 2008).

2 STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

2.1 INTERNATIONAL CITY PROJECTION THROUGH URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The process of economic liberalization and globalization, boosted since the 1980's, has been met by concomitant pluralization of international affairs. In this sense, not only do national governments seek strategies of insertion on the world economy, but also do its subnational unities, such as provinces and cities. Local and regional authorities have put great effort in forging a regional and/or global image to attract investments and promote economic growth. In this sense,

Repositioning the city on the map of the competitive landscape mean[s] reimagining and recreating urban space, not just in the eyes of the master planners and city fathers and mothers, but primarily for the outsider, the investor, developer, businesswoman or –man, or the money-packed tourist (Swyngedouw, Moulaert and Rodriguez, *Neoliberal Urbanization in Europe: Large-Scale Urban Development Projects and the New Urban Policy* 2002, 545-46).

Since then, urban policy has focused on rebuilding the cities towards an international projection. This has been achieved through “large-scale and emblematic projects”, which promise not only a new visually recognizable icon to the city, but also multiplier effects by fostering the private investments that follow these projects. As Swyngedouw, Moulaert and Rodriguez (2002:546) affirm

These projects are the material expression of a developmental logic that views megaprojects and place-marketing as means for generating future growth and for waging a competitive struggle to attract investment capital

In the list of possibilities are: building museums, technology complexes, exhibition parks, business centers, revitalizing degraded areas such as docklands, or even entire neighborhoods – whatever architects and urban planners can think of. Actual examples of these are plenty: Puerto Madero in Buenos Aires, the Guggen-

heim museum in Bilbao, the revitalization of East London for the 2012 Olympic Games and the 1998 World Expo in Lisbon.

Hosting large mega-events has been one special way of achieving that. Sporting events, mainly, pose the opportunity to implement a variety of these urban development projects. For instance, besides sports facilities, to the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, China, US\$ 1.1 billion dollars were invested in transportation and infrastructure: extending the city subway and light rail system, constructing 318 kilometers of city streets and a brand new international airport. Historical areas and landmarks were refurbished and a great effort was put into environmental improvements, including 640 kilometers of sewage pipe (Sands, *The 2008 Olympics' Impact on China* 2008) (UN Human Rights Council 2008).

Surely these urban development projects (UDPs) can bring great benefits to the city's economy and society. Still, some economic and social groups are far more negatively affected by execution of large-scale UDPs. When construction does not happen on empty spaces, it generally occurs where land costs the less: it is in degraded areas and neighborhoods of the town, where the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups often find their living. It is the very logic of revitalization and beautification. Nonetheless, it usually comes at the price of displacement, evictions and demolition of dwellings.

The alleged economic benefits [...] are not spread evenly throughout the local population. Instead, old disparities appear to be exacerbated as the processes of regeneration and beautification of the city usually focus on areas mostly populated by poor and vulnerable group (UN Human Rights Council 2009, 6).

Thus, the right to adequate housing is oftentimes threatened or disrespected by the execution of UDPs. Forced and unlawful evictions are the most publically known and discussed violations of the aforementioned right, but gentrification and reduction in the availability of social and low-cost housing can be included. In addition, due to the interdependence, indivisibility and interrelations of all human rights, the violation of the right to adequate housing seldom comes alone.

In the light of this situation, one must understand what constitutes the right to adequate housing and what are the State responsibilities regarding the assurance of the full enjoyment of this right by its citizens to coordinate international action towards the end of violations. The next section focuses on this objective.

2.2 THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE HOUSING

The matter of adequate housing has been discussed on the United Nations

under the framework of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966. The Committee of the latter (CESCR) has been responsible for monitoring the application of the Covenant, having issued general comments on housing and correlated subjects, such as forced evictions. These general comments, although not bidding, create guidance to the signatory States on their obligations under the treaty. Much of the definition of the right to adequate housing presented in this section can be found in these documents¹.

The aforementioned Covenant, on its article 11, recognizes “[...] the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and **housing** [...]” (United Nations 1966, our emphasis). So, even though the text includes the right to an adequate housing as a consecution of the general right to an adequate standard of living, the complex aspects of what consists in an adequate housing enabled the constitution of it as a topic apart.

In General Comment No. 4 (CESCR 1991, 2), the committee states that the housing “should not be interpreted in a narrow or restrictive sense which equates it with, for example, the shelter provided by merely having a roof over one’s head or views shelter exclusively as a commodity”. Therefore, the matter of guaranteeing the minimal conditions of housing, especially for socially vulnerable groups, in the event of great urban development must address a variety of points. Essentially, it demands “adequate privacy, adequate space, adequate security, adequate lighting and ventilation, adequate basic infrastructure and adequate location with regard to work and basic facilities - all at a reasonable cost” (United Nations General Assembly 1988, 2).

Although recognizing the influence of “social, economic, cultural, climatic, ecological and other factors” on the definition of the adequacy of a housing, the CESCR (1991) identified the common aspects to characterize it as such. It requires:

a. legal security of tenure: whether it is legal ownership, rental accommodation, emergency housing, occupation of land and property, or any other kind of tenure, “(...) all persons should possess a degree of security of tenure which guarantees legal protection against forced eviction, harassment and other threats.” (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) 1991);

b. availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure: “sustainable access to natural and common resources, safe drinking water, energy for

1 The Office of the United Nations’ High Commissioner for Human Rights, along with other United Nations partner, has published a series of Fact Sheets focused on matters of economic, social and cultural rights. Check fact sheet nº 2, The Right to Adequate Housing, for an UN-produced synthesis on the subject.

cooking, heating and lighting, sanitation and washing facilities, means of food storage, refuse disposal, site drainage and emergency services” (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) 1991) must be guaranteed to each and every person;

c. affordability: the costs of guaranteeing minimal adequate conditions of housing shall not threaten or compromise the attainment and satisfaction of other basic needs. The Committee even affirms the duty of State parties of establishing “housing subsidies for those unable to obtain affordable housing” (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) 1991)

d. habitability: a housing must provide protection “from cold, damp, heat, rain, wind or other threats to health, structural hazards, and disease vectors”; fundamentally, there is a link between adequate housing and better health conditions.

e. accessibility: access must be universal and take into consideration special needs of disadvantaged groups, such as “the elderly, the children, the physically disabled, the terminally ill, HIV-positive individuals, persons with persistent medical problems, the mentally ill, victims of natural disasters, people living in disaster-prone areas (...)”.

f. proper location: access to employment conditions, healthcare, education and public services must be taken into account. Location of one’s house can be a great complicator to personal development and to the full enjoyment of other basic rights.

g. cultural adequacy: the way housing is designed must not impede the expression of cultural identities. This point might be especially important to people whose religious and cultural habits reflect on their housing physical models.

The right to adequate housing must be understood in interconnection with and interdependence to other rights. For instance, improper housing may affect one’s health conditions, possibilities of employment, access to education.

2.3 STATE RESPONSIBILITIES

Under article 2 (1) for the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, all State parties have the duty to, “to the maximum of its available resources”, progressively realize in full the rights recognized in the Covenant. Recognizing that a range of State parties may have resources constraints that largely impedes the attainment of these rights, articles 11 and 23 of the Covenant highlight the “essential importance of international cooperation”. Article 3 calls upon the need of gender equality in the enjoyment of the assured rights, while article 2 prohibits “discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion,

political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status” (United Nations 1966).

These obligations are of immediate effect and are feasible to any State, inasmuch as “(...) many of the measures required to promote the right to housing would only require the abstention by the Government from certain practices and a commitment to facilitating ‘self-help’ by affected groups.” (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) 1991, 4). Likewise, positive discrimination is recommended on housing policies and legislation, giving priority to the social groups in most need. Also of immediate effect is the obligation of monitoring the situation with respect of housing, providing reports to the Committee that demonstrate that whatever necessary steps are being taken.

Most importantly, the Committee is clear when it states that, to achieve the full realization of the right to adequate housing, the formulation of a national housing strategy will “almost invariably” be required (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) 1991). Accordingly to the Global Shelter Strategy (United Nations General Assembly 1988), it “defines the objectives for the development of shelter conditions, identifies the resources available to meet these goals and the most cost-effective way of using them and sets out the responsibilities and time frame for the implementation of the necessary measures”. As to the economic model that this strategy takes, it may have “whatever mix of public and private sector measures considered appropriate.” (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) 1991, 5). The responsibility of a government to assure adequate housing conditions to all its citizens do not imply the responsibility of public financing and investment on housing.

One imperative point that ought to be stressed is that a national housing strategy has to “(...) reflect extensive genuine consultation with and participation by, all of those affected, including the homeless, the inadequately housed and their representatives.” (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) 1991, 6). The implementation of urban development projects has been oftenly accompanied by complaint of the lack of consultation with the affected communities by the authorities, which are commonly the poor and socially excluded. In the absence of dialogue and efforts to minimally attend these people needs, forced evictions are the common measure to “open way to development”, regularly with little to no compensation. Albeit displacement is not unlawful per se, the manner development projects are implemented may violate international commitments.

2.4 VIOLATIONS OF THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE HOUSING

The violation of the right of the adequate housing may happen in a variety of ways, either through more direct, explicit (and even violent) manners, or more subtle, indirect ones. Forced evictions are one example, happening in large scale and gaining much attention from media, especially in the beforewards of the Olympic Games and the Soccer World Cups. The deriving gentrification, nonetheless, can lead to violations on the right to adequate housing through economic means.

2.4.1 FORCED EVICTIONS

The CESCR (1997, 2) defines “forced eviction”, on General Comment n° 7, as “(...) the permanent or temporary removal against their will of individuals, families and/or communities from the homes and/or land which they occupy, without the provision of, and access to, appropriate forms of legal or other protection”. As aforementioned, evictions are not contrary to international law per se, rather it can be the way it is conducted. States parties are, thus, required to adopt a national legal basis against forced evictions, one which “(a) provide(s) the greatest possible security of tenure to occupiers of houses and land, (b) conform(s) to the Covenant and (c) [is] designed to control strictly the circumstances under which evictions may be carried out” (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) 1997) and that applies all agents under the authority of the State, as well as private persons and bodies.

Before the execution of large scale UDPs involving evictions and demolitions of dwellings, authorities are expected to explore “all feasible alternatives [...] in consultation with the affected persons, with a view to avoiding, or at least minimizing, the need to use force.” (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) 1997, 4) and assure legal assistance, as well as compensations for any property, both personal and real, to any person affected. When proceeding with evictions, authorities must guarantee the following procedural protections beyond the already cited: “adequate and reasonable notice for all affected persons prior to the scheduled date of eviction”; “especially where groups of people are involved, government officials or their representatives to be present during an eviction”; “all persons carrying out the eviction to be properly identified”; “evictions not to take place in particularly bad weather or at night unless the affected persons consent otherwise”, among others (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) 1997, 4).

It ought to be stressed that forced evictions are recurrent in both developed and developing countries, and that State obligations regarding the right to adequate housing “is not qualified by considerations relating to its available resources.” (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) 1997, 3). The United Nations estimates that over 1 billion people are inadequately housed (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) 1991). The 2009’s Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing and the impact of major international sports events brings examples of evicts due to the construction of sporting venues: 15% of the population of Seoul was evicted in the preparation for the 1998 Olympic Games; 35,000 families evicted from public lands for the 2010 Commonwealth Games held in New Delhi; and residents forced to leave to Olympic districts by force of the Compulsory Purchase Order issued in preparation to the 2012 Olympic Games in London.

2.4.2 GENTRIFICATION

Regeneration processes of degraded areas and neighborhood are often followed by rising prices of property and rental, leading to displacement due to incapability of the original residents of affording the higher cost of living. While high-income earners move to the area, former inhabitants find themselves obliged to move to other areas, often further than and as degraded as the neighborhood they used to live in. Thus, the greater housing stock concentrates on the higher income levels, with social and low-cost housing. For instance, 1,400 low-cost housing units in Vancouver were lost due to real estate speculation generated by the 2010 Winter Olympic Games, and in London the price of the properties surrounding Olympic sites were increased up to 4.6 per cent, while the general trend to the rest of the city was a down of 0.2 per cent (UN Human Rights Council 2008).

Even though these displacements are the result of an economic dynamics where private, more than public sector, has a greater influence, the aforementioned obligations of the States regarding the right of adequate housing still have to be satisfied. According to the CESCR (1991, 3), “In accordance with the principle of affordability, tenants should be protected by appropriate means against unreasonable rent levels or rent increases”. Furthermore, the availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure and the location are the fundamental aspects of the right of the displaced persons that most probably will be in jeopardy. Through regulation of real state practices and/or proper relocation of the displaced people to other dwelling that meet the standards of the right of

adequate housing, the negative effects of gentrification might be reduced. In any way, whether by force of evictions or gentrification, should the affected individuals become homeless; and through all possible means, should all human rights be protected from further violations.

3 PREVIOUS INTERNATIONAL ACTIONS

The right to adequate housing is enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights' article 25, which states that "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, *including* food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services (...)" (United Nations General Assembly 1948, emphasis ours). Besides the Declaration and the International Covenant of Economic and Social Rights, the right to adequate housing² has abundant other legal sources under international law. The Declaration on Social Progress and Development enunciates that "Social progress and development shall aim at the continuous raising of the material and spiritual standards of living of all members of society, with respect for and in compliance with human rights and fundamental freedoms, through the attainment of the following main goals: [...] (f) The provision for all, particularly persons in low-income groups and large families, of adequate housing and community services." (UN General Assembly 1969, emphasis ours). Also, under the article 8 (1) of the Declaration on the Right To Development (1986), "States should undertake, at the national level, all necessary measures for the realization of the right to development and shall ensure, *inter alia*, equality of opportunity for all in their access to basic resources, education, health services, food, *housing*, employment and the fair distribution of income." (UN General Assembly 1986, emphasis ours).

Mentions to the right to housing on other human rights documents, aimed at specific social groups' needs, include the International Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951), the International Convention on The Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons (1975), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979), the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990). Therefore, as stated on point 13 of the

2 Sometimes referred to as adequate shelter.

Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, “The right to adequate housing is universally recognized by the community of nations. [...] All nations without exception, have some form of obligation in the shelter sector [...] [and] All citizens of all States, poor as they may be, have the right to expect their Governments to be concerned about their shelter needs” (UN General Assembly 1988).

In fact, the right to housing has been an intensively discussed topic throughout the years in a variety of UN committees besides the Human Rights Council, including the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Governing Council of the Human Settlements Program³, the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights⁴ and the Commission on the Status of Women. Reflecting the multiple possible perspectives of the subject and the necessity of understanding the right to housing in relation to other human rights, the resolutions approved by these organs approach the specific needs and situations of women, children, the youth, indigenous people, people with disabilities, refugees and others. One common feature of these resolutions is the frequent stress given to the necessity of attaining special attention to those who are the most affected ones by violations of human rights and the inclusion of them, or organizations representing them, on the decision making process of housing policy and on all levels of government responsible for this issue.

The Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat), for instance, in article 4, invited “Governments and other partners to assist in capacity-building by providing resources to young people and their organizations, in order to promote inclusiveness, responsiveness and transparency in local governance and community development, and to enable young people to participate in international, national and local activities related to sustainable environmental and human settlements development.” (2005). The UN Commission on Human Settlements, having devoted much work to the matter of human settlements, premises its approach to housing rights on, among others, “(c) the need for an emphasis on people’s housing processes” (1994). This means that people, rather than governments or the commercial housing sector, are the main stakeholders in the housing policy and that there must be “an effective utilization of existing capacity within informal settlements to carry the housing process forward and recognize the appropriateness and effectiveness of handing the housing process back to the people”. (UN Commission on Human Settlements 1995).

Specifically about housing rights of those caught in the middle of a war, the

3 Formerly Commission on Human Settlements.

4 Formerly Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination.

Commission on Human Settlement declared that “no human being, irrespective of race, colour, creed or caste, shall be ejected from his lawful home or land by any foreign Government or as a result of foreign intervention” (1983).

The works of the many UN agencies related to the right to housing have been especially attentive to the gender perspective, often recalling the way women are disproportionately affected by violations of human rights and urging governments to integrate them to the planning and development of housing policies at all levels of government in their resolutions. Due to the fact that the marginalization of women in society and the denial of the full enjoyment of their human rights have cultural roots, the former Commission on Human Rights “Encourages Governments to support the transformation of customs and traditions that discriminate against women and deny women security of tenure and equal ownership of, access to, and control over land and equal rights to own property and to adequate housing” (2000).

The Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements and Action Plan, formulated in the occasion of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat), established a series of guidelines for action. It was defined as government’s responsibility the preparation of spatial strategy plans, understood as part of a larger development strategy that encompasses “policies on industrialization, agriculture, social welfare, and environmental and cultural preservation” (UN Conference on Human Settlements 1976). Differently from the more recent approaches, these commitments were mostly State-centered and reflected an overall economic paradigm of much more reliance on public sector⁵. 1987 was proclaimed the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (UN General Assembly 1982); and in 1988, the General Assembly established the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, urging governments to develop national and sub-national strategies for housing according to the defined guidelines in the resolution. The Global Strategy focus are national public policies, accordingly defining that international cooperation should aim to “enhance and support national capabilities to develop and implement national action components of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000.” (UN General Assembly 1988).

In June 1996, the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held in Istanbul, Turkey, defined a series of commitments and recommendations, known as Habitat Agenda. This time, the document pro-

5 Resolution 15/10 of the Commission on Human Settlements (1995), Priorities for national action to provide housing for all, explicitly recognizes “the effects of the changing economic, social and political conditions, trends and policies in the past two decades which have moved from a focus on public-sector interventions to an enabling approach, and the impacts of those changes on the implementation of housing policies”.

vided a much wider series guideline, involving also the private sector and organizations of the civil society. On their part, governments were expected to take actions to promote, protect and ensure the right to adequate housing, including respecting the principle of non-discrimination, providing legal security of tenure for all, monitoring housing conditions, formulating housing policies in consultation with the affected population and “adopting policies aimed at making housing habitable, affordable and accessible, including for those who are unable to secure adequate housing through their own means” (UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) 1996). Among these policies are: provision of subsidies and rental to the poor, expanding the supply of affordable housing and “Promoting sustainable spatial development patterns and transportation systems that improve accessibility of goods, services, amenities and work” (UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) 1996).

In 2000, the Commission on Human Rights appointed a Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing. Since then, the mandate of the rapporteur has been renewed every three years and annual reports have focused, among others, on discrimination, forced evictions, homelessness, and the impact of globalization, and of mega-events on the realization of the right to adequate housing. This decision reveals the importance of raising the topic in the United Nations Human Rights Council, as it represents one of the few times an specific right was object of such an attention.

At the regional level, mentions to the right to adequate housing are present at human rights instruments of a variety of European organs⁶ and the Organization of American States. The Resolution on Shelter for the Homeless in the European Community, under paragraph 4 and 6, “Calls for clear priority to be given to legal rules concerning the implementation of the right to adequate housing” and “Asks that the right to a home should be guaranteed by legislation, that Member States should recognize it as a fundamental right and that no person or family should be evicted without being rehoused” (European Parliament 1987). Article 31 (k) of the Charter of the Organization of American States asserts that “[...] the Member States agree to dedicate every effort to achieve the following goals: [...] (k) Adequate housing for all sectors of the population.” (1948); while in the Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, article 11 states “Everyone shall have the

6 The right to housing can be derived from human rights instruments such as the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950) and its Protocols No. 1 and 4, the European Social Charter and its Additional Protocol, the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers, the Community Charter of Fundamental Social Rights and in documents of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

right to live in a healthy environment and to have access to basic public services.” (Organization of American States 1999).

4 BLOC POSITIONS

Iraq’s and **Afghanistan’s** strategies have been mainly conceived to address huge housing deficits that followed years of hiatus in supply and massive population movements deriving the recent wars they were engaged in. The new government in Iraq has recently developed a new housing policy in which a range of housing typologies are supported, including provision of public housing in the form of high-rise apartment blocks (UN-Habitat 2011). During the two and a half decades of conflict in Afghanistan, approximately six million people were forced to flee as refugees to neighboring countries. Nowadays, as returnees arrive, and the development of housing proceeds at a slow pace, the housing shortage is expected to continue to grow (World Bank 2008). Alleviating such a severe shortage requires concerted actions by the government, the private sector, donors, and stakeholders. To date, the World Bank has provided a total of over \$3.07 billion for development and emergency reconstruction projects, and five budget support operations in the country (World Bank 2015).

The eight years of war with Iraq caused the **Islamic Republic of Iran** to face a massive destruction of houses and infrastructure in border areas, the impact of which is still a concern. In addition, demand for housing is steadily growing as an outcome of population increase. The right to suitable housing is ensured in article 31 of the Iranian Constitution. The Government’s program for the housing sector immediately after the Islamic Revolution of 1979 was, to a large extent, based in public land ownership. Under this framework, three main pieces of legislation passed: the Urban Wasteland Ownership Law (1979); the Urban Land Law (1982); and the New Urban Land Law (1987) (UN Economic and Social Council 2006). Current housing policies focus mainly on State participation in the construction sector, with finance directed by the Central Bank through credit allocation and subsidies. Land subsidies amount to three per cent of the country’s GDP. However, most of the land distributed to households and cooperatives remains undeveloped due to the lack of sufficient resources to provide basic services (UN-Habitat 2011).

Housing has been a matter of great concern of the Israeli governments since the foundation of the State in 1948, as hundreds of thousands of immigrants and refugees needed to be adequately absorbed. Throughout four decades, the public sector was active in providing housing to its citizens or indirectly support-

ing home ownership with subsidized credit and investments on infrastructure. Nonetheless, since the 1990s, state involvement has strongly diminished and inequality risen. Since then, housing affordability has become a critical question to many Israelis, with prices soaring and motivating public demonstrations in 2011. Furthermore, public policies have failed to grant access to housing to the most disadvantaged ethnic groups of Israeli society. In fact, housing rights are a very sensitive topic concerning the **State of Israel**, as it has been in the center of one of its most internationally criticized actions in relation to the Occupied Palestinian Territories: the building of Jewish settlements, mostly at the expense of evictions in Palestinian owned land. A variety of UN organs, the Humans Rights Council included, have strongly criticized the expansion of Israeli settlements in Palestine, which not only represents a gross violation of humanitarian law, but also the fulfillment of the right to adequate housing of some at the expense of the violation of others' (UN Human Rights Council 2012).

Oil revenues have given the **United Arab Emirates** one of the highest incomes per capita in the world. Combined with a desire for rapid development, which rendered Emirati cities, such as Dubai and Abu Dhabi, a modern and lavish skyline, urban policies resulted in the building of huge numbers of low-cost houses and their offering to citizens sometimes at no cost (Salim 2004). This has been done through direct building programs, mainly through approved contractors, with hugely discounted or entirely free allocation, and interest free loans. (Al-Mansoori 1997). Similarly, **Qatar** presents an ongoing construction boom in heavily populated areas such as Najma, Al Mansoura and Doha Jadeed. Differently from UAE, however, this was only added to a serious shortage of housing that currently strikes the country and affects in particular middle-class families. Sudden demolition of old buildings has put many long-time residents of these areas in a difficult situation as they scramble to find alternative housing. In addition, the high number of city dwellers that was driven out by the demand for construction and service workers ahead of the 2022 World Cup had only emphasized the need for more mid-range residential units in the interim (Gulf Times 2013).

In **Turkey**, the Mass Housing Law (1981) defines the fundamental principles that give direction to address the housing problem in the country. It determines the tasks of the National Housing Development Administration of Turkey (TOKI), the public entity that is responsible for increasing housing supply for the low-to-middle income population, who are not able to own a housing unit within the existing market conditions (UN-Habitat 2011) (Turkey 2012).

In November 2010, a report published by UN-Habitat (the United Na-

tions Human Settlements Program) confirmed that Africa is the fastest urbanizing continent in the world and that by 2030 its population will be 50 percent urban. Despite a relatively late urbanization compared to other regions, several African countries have recently had to face huge urban problems due to the vertiginous growth that some of its largest cities have gone through. By 2010, Africa had a slum population of 200 million people, which corresponds to 62% of its urban population (UN-Habitat 2010).

Nigeria, for instance, has in Lagos – its most populous city – a prominent example of this pattern of urbanization. Over two-thirds of the population of Lagos live in informal settlements or slums scattered around the city. Measures at both federal and state levels have been taken to handle issues concerning housing for the urban poor, such as the Fourth National Development Plan (1984-1985) and the UN-backed Master Plan for Metropolitan Lagos (1980-2000) that called for the provision of housing units for low-income households in Lagos. The persistence of the housing problem, though, led the state government to look for new sorts of intervention, including the establishment of the Lagos Metropolitan Development and Governance Project (Abosede 2006). Despite all these efforts, the concrete achievements in terms of “providing adequate housing” for the urban poor in Lagos and in Nigeria as a whole remain “essentially minimal” (Ademiluyi 2010).

In **Zimbabwe**, providing housing has been one of the most critical issues of government social policy especially after independence in 1980, although financial institutions are responsible for promoting a great part of housing development projects. Noteworthy, however, is the role of housing cooperatives in the country. The Zimbabwe National Association of Housing Cooperatives (ZINAHCO), the main organization in the sector, provided the bulk of housing units that were constructed in Zimbabwe during the past decade (CAHF 2014).

The October 1990 war in **Rwanda**, with the subsequent amount of displaced people, followed by the 1994 genocide against Tutsi aroused massive destruction of country's houses and infrastructure. Such a worrying situation led the government to implement policies to address emergency situations, which included the construction of numerous housing units between 1995 and 2001. More than 265,000 houses were built under resettlement programs, mainly in the so-called regrouping settlement centers “imidugudu” (Republic of Rwanda 2009). Since then, Rwandan authorities have manifested their regard to housing matters through programs such as the Strategic Framework Vision 2020, the National Urban Housing Policy and other aligned development strategies, namely the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS)

(Republic of Rwanda 2015).

The civil war in **Sierra Leone** (from 1991 to 2002) left a great part of the population destitute and destroyed close to 350,000 dwellings. Since 2002, however, Sierra Leone has made considerable strides towards development. Nowadays, 75 percent of households are owner-occupiers and 19 percent are renters (CAHF 2014). Housing conditions, nonetheless, remain extremely inadequate. The legislative framework for housing and regional/urban planning is weak and there are no standardized building regulations (UN-Habitat 2014).

Akin to Sierra Leone, **Liberia** has been recovering from the lingering effects of its civil wars, primarily due to the national Poverty Reduction Strategy. Housing stock, though, is still insufficient in the country, and the poor state of housing has contributed substantially to the rapid spread of the Ebola virus last year. The Liberian government has currently an ambitious program of transforming the country into a middle-income one by the year 2030, known as the Agenda for Transformation (AFT). Such goal, which lays emphasis on housing, has reinforced the capacity of the National Housing Authority (NHA) – a state-owned institution that provides housing at a relative scale. In response, the NHA has developed a national plan (2013-2017) that includes interventions regarding housing development finance, housing development policies and strategies, and town and city planning (CAHF 2014).

Central African Republic's housing policy statement and housing strategy were adopted in 2008, with the end of a brutal 10-year civil war. Since then, two important decisions have been made: the signing into law of the creation of the Central African Housing Bank and the creation of the Central African Housing Promotion Agency (Central African Republic 2008). Unfortunately, all of these plans were compromised with the outbreak of violence that followed the March 2013 Coup d'État.

Subsequently to the historic election of Mandela in 1994, successive governments in **South Africa** have focused on implementing policies to “combat the spatial manifestations of apartheid”, especially by regarding provisions of housing for the urban poor (Bollens 1998, 741). Within the last fifteen years in particular, South Africa's housing strategies have fostered a combination of private, public and community initiatives wherein the state, rather than taking a central role on direct housing provision, has focused on the maximization of market and community involvement (Goodlad 1996). This trend was translated into the national housing policy dubbed “Breaking New Ground” (BNG), whose aim is to fulfill the government's plan to promote the development of “sustainable human settlements” in South Africa (South Africa 2012). Sadly, forceful evictions of the

urban poor from slums have also been among the policy options to address the housing crisis in South Africa. In Cape Town, for instance, in order to construct rental housing for the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa, 20,000 people were evicted from an informal settlement and relocated to areas outside of the city (Newton 2009).

The housing sector in the **People's Republic of China** has gone under great changes in the last decades, following the trends of market liberalization that boosted Chinese economy growth. The focus on privatization of the housing sector of the last two decades, although having successfully raised house ownership from 20% in 1980 to 70% in 2010, was accompanied by growing inequality among social classes, with a sharp increase in housing prices and loss of affordable housing to urban renewal (Huang 2012). As under China's property law, urban land is state owned, lack of security of tenure has been an especially severe problem in the implementation of urban development plans. From 1993 to 2003, 2.5 million people were evicted and 40 million square meters of housing destroyed only on the city of Shanghai (UN Human Settlements Programme 2007). Inadequate housing is an even more severe problem among the illegal migrants in industrial urban areas, as most times they have no access to housing subsidies and other public assistance allowed (Huang 2012).

Since 1985, the Supreme Court of the **Republic of India** recognizes the right to adequate housing as constitutional obligation of the state, as part of the all-encompassing Right to Life under Article 21. A series of judgements by the Court set a jurisprudence against forced evictions and in favor of the rights of minorities (Kothari 2002). The Executive power has also put great effort in the matter of housing, with National Housing Policies being adopted and renewed since 1994, attaining to internationally accorded principles and putting "special emphasis on vulnerable sections of society such as Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes, Backward Classes, Minorities and the urban poor" (Government of India 2007). Still, the right to adequate housing is widely violated in the country, with millions of people living in humane conditions: "the housing shortage is estimated to be 24.7 million. [...] urban areas in our country are also characterized by severe shortage of basic services like potable water, well laid out drainage system, sewerage network, sanitation facilities, electricity, roads and appropriate solid waste disposal." (Government of India 2007, 1)

The **Republic of Indonesia** is another typical case of populous developing country, with steady economic growth but struggling with high poverty rates and booming urbanization – in fact, the country has the fastest rate of growth of urban population in Asia (World Bank 2012). The government has commit-

ted itself to the realization of the right to adequate housing through stabilizing goals, focused on low-income households, in the National Development Plans. Historically, the Indonesian government has provided public housing on just a small scale, although it has much experience in slum-upgrading programs, which date to the 1960s. In sum, the informal sector has been the main responsible for building and maintaining households, known as *kampungs*, while the public sector invested in improving the conditions of these communities (UN Human Rights Council 2013). It lacks, though, central planning, essential to a sustainable growth of the cities, especially considering adequate infrastructure. Security of tenure is also another important issue to *kampungs*, as 50% of all land parcels in Jakarta, for instance, do not have registration (World Bank 2011, 21), leaving these families susceptible to forced evictions. On its report of the mission to the country, the Special Rapporteur demonstrated worrisome that housing policy has been mostly targeted at middle-class households, instead of at the most poor (UN Human Rights Council 2013).

While the majority of the population in the **Islamic Republic of Pakistan** is rural (64% in 2013), its rapidly urbanizing, with the transition to a mostly urban society, is to be made until 2030. Urban policy is absent in the country, and so does national housing strategies. Less than a third of the 80,000 new housing units built every year are supplied by the legal economy (Alexander and Jacobsen 2002). Still, housing credit and subsidized infrastructure to affluent the middle-class-targeted is abundant (Siddiqui 2014). One internationally recognized example, nonetheless, is Sindh Province government that, from 1980 onward in the Orangi slum of Karachi, implemented a highly successful “incremental housing” model. It counted on the informal sector and “one million low-income inhabitants, on a spirited self-help basis, improved their schools, housing, and health-care access, and even built a sewage system at one fifth the cost projected by civil agencies” (Alexander and Jacobsen 2002).

Being a mostly rural country, in the **Socialist Republic of Vietnam** violations of the right to housing usually involve land grab for development project, such as infrastructure, hotels, shopping centers etc. According to Vietnamese laws, land belong to the people and is managed by the state, which issues land-use rights certificates and can, under reasons of public interest, forcibly retrieve the land. Even though the national legislation demands notification with appropriate time and compensations, in practice, security of tenure is highly problematic and forced evictions are abundant. Women, especially widows, face denial of access to land by the authorities, violating the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination (Vietnam Committee on Human Rights; International Fed-

eration for Human Rights 2014). Furthermore, economic liberalization, housing sector included, has unequally distributed its benefits, increasing the social gap. Growing inequality along with insufficient planning has led to misbalanced growth, in which there are no appropriate infrastructure to secure adequate housing standards for all.

The **State of Japan** has one of the most advanced legislations assuring security of tenure. Reports of evictions carried unlawfully, without proper financial reparation are scarce. In fact, critics point that private and public development projects are overly affected by these laws, characterizing them as “weak” in granting “the state’s ability to relocate landowners with fair market compensation” (Japan Today 2010). Still, the country does not go without bad records on housing rights. Homelessness⁷ has increased and became a social problem since the 1990s, with economic stagnation following the 1997 Asian financial crisis (Okamoto, et al. 2004). Since then, the expulsion of homeless people has become frequent, especially from places such as public parks, and the entourages of facilities hosting major international events, such as the Aichi Expo, the World Athletic Games and the upcoming 2020 Summer Olympics (UN Human Settlements Programme 2007).

The **Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste** is a severe case of massive housing rights violations during conflict. Three years before its independence from Indonesia, in 2002, a UN-backed referendum rejected further autonomy in favor of full self-determination and a campaign of terror was unleashed by militia groups and factions of the Indonesian military in response. 67,500 houses – or 40% of all national stock – were destroyed and thousands of others were abandoned, most of them being taken by other displaced people (Bugalski 2010). The displacement of 450,000 people created a great pressure on the supply and prices of houses, especially on the capital Dilli, prompting the creation of large refugee camps (Srinivas and Bell 2015). The Constitution, promulgated in 2002, enshrined the right of everyone to a house of adequate conditions. Later, a strong political crisis, in 2006, led to a security vacuum that allowed those whose houses were taken in 1999 to seek revenge: 150,000 people lost shelter in two years (Bugalski 2010). Resettlement of the internally displaced, reconstruction of the damaged houses and expansion of housing stock, and the resolution of property disputes are key steps to solve housing problems in the country, still unachieved due to the feebleness of State institutions (Bugalski 2010).

One of the current major concerns in the ambience of the European Union is the housing crisis: the affordability of housing has deteriorated as house prices

7 In Japan, the homeless are also referred to as rough sleepers.

have raised faster than average earnings. The **United Kingdom** faced, between 2002 and 2007, a rise of 90% in house prices, one of the sharpest rates in the Euro zone, making homeownership unaffordable for a large segment of the population (Chamberlin 2009). In 2012, London hosted the Olympic Games, whose most of infrastructure was built in the eastern and poorest region of the city, known as the East End. Although urban boosterism was brought about, the Olympics is the latest and greatest property development opportunity in a process of gentrification that is redesigning the East End, driving out the area's traditional populations and undermining their right to adequate housing. Notable advances have been performed in terms of housing policies, however. The British government recently launched the Help to Buy scheme, a package that envisages to stimulate the housing market and the economy through Government guarantees for equity, providing beneficiaries with equity loans and mortgage guarantees (UN General Assembly 2013).

France boasts a developed social housing system (the so-called “*Habitations à loyer modéré*” or “HLM”) that provides subsidized assistance for low-income and poor people. A recently adopted law on the justiciable right to housing aims to give people the right to seek legal redress before an administrative tribunal, where their right to housing has been avoided by public authorities. It can require the State to offer the claimant adequate housing, within certain categories of need (Council of Europe 2008). Similarly, **Germany** has a legal apparatus capable of providing highly responsive housing supply, significant rental controls, and tight credit regulations. Because renting is the dominant housing choice in the country, the political system is highly sensitive to tenants' rights and perceived threats to the status quo typically receive prominent media attention and political responses (Macro Business 2011).

Important events in **Spain**, such as the 1992 Olympic Games, as well as tourism and secondary houses, have deeply proved to fuel speculation in land with impact in the prices of housing in cities like Barcelona, Seville and some coastal municipalities. The right to a “decent and adequate housing” is recognized in article 47 of the Spanish Constitution. Among developed countries, though, Spain has experienced one of the highest increases in housing prices in recent years (UN General Assembly 2008). The economic crisis in the country, with over 5 million unemployed, hit homeowners particularly hard. Whether in terms of renting or purchasing houses, affordability is a major problem faced by a large proportion of the population that is paying a high percentage of their income on mortgages. In addition, the country seriously lacks public housing: the current housing programs do not address the needs of the bottom 20-25% of

the population (UN Human Rights 2006).

In what concerns homeless people, **Hungary** has recently been involved in controversy due to the amendment to the Hungarian Fundamental Law that came into force in 2013 and criminalizes homelessness. The additional amendments to the Constitution recognize the right to adequate housing and firms the commitment to provide access to housing for every homeless person. Notwithstanding, according to the former UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, Raquel Rolnik, the particular provision that authorizes national and municipal legislation to outlaw sleeping in public spaces, for instance, is contrary to Hungarian international human rights obligations of equality and non-discrimination (UN Human Rights 2013).

Under the common intent to put an end to the protracted refugee situation that followed the 1991-1995 conflicts on the former Yugoslavia, **Serbia** and **Bosnia and Herzegovina** took the challenge of consolidating, along with Croatia and Montenegro, a Western Balkans “Regional Housing Program” (RHP). The housing solutions available include construction of apartment buildings, pre-fabricated houses and provision of building materials for the renovation of existing houses (European Commission 2013).

In the **Russian Federation**, ownership and management of houses have been transferred from public monopoly to private sector after the housing reforms of the 1990s, in the transition to market economy. Today, housing-related problems receive great attention on Russian media and housing is the subject of one of the four national priority programs (Vihavainen 2009), demonstrating how the Government and civil society are engaged in this matter. One persistent problem from the Soviet era, nonetheless, is the physical inadequacy of housing in terms of space, with the existence of overcrowded areas (Burdyak 2015). Nowadays, the lack of maintenance of the housing stock is one of the main causes of inadequate conditions: in 2004, 11% of Russian housings were in need of urgent renovation (UN Economic Commission for Europe 2004). As in other former socialist countries, the privatization of housing has faced greater disparities in economic social conditions.

Modern housing policy in the **United States** began during the Depression, with the National Housing Act of 1934, which created the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to underwrite and insure mortgages and provide security to lenders in case of default (UN General Assembly 2010). However, financial reforms undertook since mid 1980’s allowed a progressive financialization of the housing market in the US, leading to the sub-prime crises in 2008. In its aftermath, the crisis that broke out in the country’s housing market has had severe

consequences on housing affordability both within North America and across the globe. Since then, unaffordability is reaching unprecedented levels in the US and became a serious social and economic issue (UN-Habitat 2011). Although indirectly, homeowners in the United States are subsidized by tax relief. The federal government spends USD 4.7 billion per year in tax credits for building and rehabilitation of affordable housing⁸, but it has made little progress in stemming the reduction of low-cost rentals from the national housing stock. In addition, assistance to very low-income households reaches only about one quarter of eligible renters (UN-Habitat 2011).

Brazil has been drawing international attention due to both the 2014 World Cup and the upcoming 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. The preparation for these large-scale events has led to major social impacts. According to the Swiss-based NGO, Terre des Hommes, some 170,000 people lost their homes due to the building or renovation of stadiums, roads, airports and other infrastructure projects for the World Cup (BBC 2014). In Rio, the building projects for tournaments and Olympics are suggested to be a pretext for “social cleansing”, as tens of thousands of slum dwellers have been already driven out to the city periphery (The Guardian 2013). Despite the gentrification process and the forced evictions that took place to make way for such great urban development plans, Brazilian housing policy proved to be quite ambitious in recent years. In the first quarter of 2009, the Government launched the so-called “*Minha Casa, Minha Vida*”, a housing program aimed at reducing the number of informal settlements through subsidized credit for either low-income population and the construction sector. As from early 2014, more than 1.5 million Brazilian families benefited from the program and were granted homeownership (Brazil 2014).

Chile is a prominent example of long-term subsidies programs’ use in expanding housing opportunities to low-income households. The Chilean program, launched in 1977, allocated capital subsidies to households according to income and a number of criteria such as level of savings and membership of certain subgroups (i.e. single mothers). The program also limited the invasion of land and extended basic infrastructure to a larger percentage of the population, what contributed to reduce the country’s housing deficit and the proportion of urban slums (UN-Habitat 2011). In the same way – but with less robust success –, **Argentina** implemented mortgage-backed securities as a means of raising

8 In contrast to the Brazilian “*Minha Casa, Minha Vida*” or the Mexican INFONAVIT, through the “housing choice vouchers program” the beneficiary is free to choose any housing that meets the requirements of the program and is not limited to units located in subsidized housing projects.

housing finance capital. Some Argentinean programs, such as the Neighborhood Improvement Program (PROMEBA) and Rosario Habitat, share the goal of providing legal title to households in low-income settlements along with supporting infrastructure improvements and initiatives to promote healthier living conditions and youth education (UN-Habitat 2011).

Federal policies – particularly from the National Workers’ Housing Fund Institute (INFONAVIT) – in **Mexico** in recent decades have both facilitated and encouraged the development of mass-produced homes throughout the country on inexpensive, peri-urban land far from job opportunities, city centers and urban services. Mexican rapid urban expansion that resulted from such policies, facing these distortions, had ultimately to be readdressed by authorities (OECD 2015). In 2013, Mexico announced a new approach to housing and urban policy, calling for a more explicit qualitative focus on housing and the urban environment. The National Housing Policy 2013-2018 aims to “provide a suitable environment for the development of a decent life”, with a strategy of “transition toward a smart, sustainable development model to ensure decent housing for Mexicans” (Mexico 2013).

A chronic shortage of suitable housing is one of the greatest challenges that **Venezuela** faces nowadays. The vertiginous urbanization in the country was largely a result of the 1970s oil boom, and led to a sprawling and chaotic network of slums in Venezuelan major cities. In order to uphold every citizen’s right to adequate housing, far-reaching strategies were adopted in recent years, including a set of laws and concessions that seek to democratize the access to urban land, namely land titles, land rights for indigenous communities, the Urban Land Law (2009), and the Law of Land and Development (2001) (Venezuela 2013).

5. QUESTIONS TO PONDER

1. Are there legal hiatuses when it comes to the definition of the right to an adequate housing itself and to the formal obligations of states in providing secure tenure for their citizens?

2. What is the diagnosis for the inability of the previously mentioned international legal instruments to achieve its own agreed terms related to the right to adequate housing?

3. In the light of all previous efforts of the international community and the overall failure in securing the universal enjoyment of the right to adequate housing, what is within reach of the United Nations Human Rights Council to resolve

in order to implement what it has already determined?

4. Can large Urban Development Projects conciliate its goals of attracting international attention and capital and the advancement of the right to adequate housing? What lessons the already implemented UDPs teach the Council about conciliating both?

5. What is the role of national housing security programs and to what extent do they achieve the goal of guaranteeing access to adequate housing? How can the United Nations Human Rights Council supervise and ultimately foster such local policies?

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