# Women in Peace Operations: Female Representation within MINUSTAH's Uniformed Personnel

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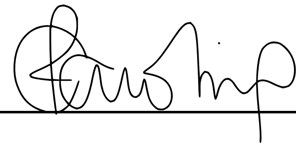
## DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree Master of Security Studies at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university.



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## ABSTRACT

The peacekeeping mechanism is arguably the most important tool the United Nations can resort to when dealing with threats to international peace and security. Since the end of the Cold War, a number of Security Council resolutions and peacekeeping policies have acknowledged the importance of increasing the number of female peacekeepers in the uniformed components of UN missions in order to adapt to the changing nature of violent conflicts and to address new security threats. This study focuses on the integration of women in peace operations and their impact on both the mission and the host population by exploring the case of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). MINUSTAH was seen by Haitians as a return to international occupation, which was exacerbated by the many cases recorded of sexual violence by peacekeepers against the host population. The MINUSTAH case tests the argument that women peacekeepers improve a UN mission's operational effectiveness because of their assumed inherent ability to connect with the host community and tame the violent behaviour of their male counterparts. This study argues that without addressing issues of men and violent masculinities in military institutions, providing female peacekeepers with proper pre-deployment training, and deploying more women in front-line positions, simply raising the number of women deployed in the field is insufficient to really improve the operational effectiveness of UN missions.

Keywords: UN peacekeeping, gender mainstreaming, women peacekeepers, UNSCR 1325, MINUSTAH, Haiti



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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

(Names used are accurate as of August 2020)

CDTs: Conduct and Discipline Teams

CVR: Community Violence Reduction

DDR: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

DPO: Department of Peace Operations

DPRK: Democratic People's Republic of Korea

ECOSOC: United Nations Economic and Social Council

ETs: Engagement Teams

FFPU: Female Formed Police Unit

FPU: Formed Police Unit

GA: General Assembly

HNP: Haitian National Police

IMF: International Monetary Fund

IPOs: Individual Police Officers

MICAH: French acronym for the International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti

MICIVIH: French acronym for the International Civilian Mission in Haiti

MIF: Multinational Interim Force

MINUGUA: Spanish acronym for the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala

MINUSTAH: French acronym for the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti



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MIPONUH: French acronym for the United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti

MNF: Multinational Force

NAP: National Action Plan

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

OAS: Organization of American States

ONUC: French acronym for the (United Operations in the Congo)

R2P: Responsibility to Protect

SC: Security Council

SEA: Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

SGBV: Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

TCCs: Troop Contributing Countries

UN: United Nations

UNAMID: United Nations – African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur

UNDP: United Nations Development Program

UNEF: United Nations Emergency Force

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNMIH: United Nations Mission in Haiti

UNMISS: United Nations Mission in South Sudan

UNSCR: United Nations Security Council Resolution

UNSMIH: United Nations Support Mission in Haiti



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UNSOS: United Nations Support Operation in Somalia

UNTAG: United Nations Transition Assistance Group

UNTMIH: United Nations Transition Mission in Haiti

UNTSO: United Nations Truce Supervision Operation

UNVMC: United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia

US: United States

USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

WPS: Women, Peace and Security



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Research Theme

The Charter of the United Nations (UN) declares that the organization's main objective is to protect future generations from the afflictions of war (United Nations, 1945). The UN was given the opportunity to reaffirm itself in these terms by addressing the security concerns brought to light by the end of the Cold War, among which were the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and small arms, international terrorism, intensification of paramilitary activity, regional conflicts and ethnic nationalism, and the rise in the number of conflicts in general (Boutros-Ghali, 1992:201; Raghavan, 2007:23-24). In this context, the peacekeeping mechanism has become the most significant tool for the prevention and management of conflicts around the world, but it had to undergo a number of adaptations to better approach the new issues emerging in that period. In the post-Cold War period, the acknowledgement of the change in the nature of conflicts (from inter- to intra-state) highlighted the need to address conflict not only in military terms. Thus, peace operations came to include a number of civilian elements (Goulding, 1993:456). Nevertheless, the uniformed component continued to be an important element, and up to this day, accounts for the majority of UN personnel in field operations, despite the increasing importance of the civilian and humanitarian components. Women started to participate more and be considered even more important to the missions due to the new humanitarian approach and the new tasks entailed in peace operations, (United Nations Department of Peace Operations, 2009; 2018a). Such belief is based on the essentialist perception that women are inherently caring, nurturing and peaceful and therefore, more suited to humanitarian tasks (Kaufman & Williams, 2013:7).

Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), adopted in 2000 by the UN Security Council (SC), is considered an important milestone in the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda exactly because it recognizes women not only as victims but also as important players in conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding. Among the topics addressed in the resolution, the SC urges for increased female participation in peacekeeping which is an important step towards the deployment of more gender-balanced operations



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(United Nations Security Council, 2000). Nine other resolutions were adopted after 1325 – 1820 (2008b), 1888 (2009b), 1889 (2009c), 1960 (2010c), 2106 (2013a), 2122 (2013c), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019a) and 2493 (2019b) – aiming at fostering gender-sensitivity in peace operations. Some of them specifically address female participation in the uniformed components of UN operations.

Despite the subsequent efforts and advances, the number of female personnel in the field has been growing at a very slow pace. Reports on troop contributions published by the UN Department of Peace Operations in 2019 showed that female peacekeepers accounted for only around five percent of the uniformed personnel working in active missions (United Nations Department of Peace Operations, 2019a). Aiming to gain better understanding of the UN gender parity strategy and the impact of female peacekeepers in the uniformed component of peace operations, this study discusses the ways in which women are being integrated in these operations' uniformed components by analysing the case of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

Established in 2004, MINUSTAH was the first multidimensional operation deployed in Haiti, and its mandate was based on three main pillars: creating a stable and safe environment, guaranteeing due political process in the country and protecting human rights (Hamann, 2009:40). The text of Resolution 1542, which established MINUSTAH, also mentions the observation of Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security – which could be interpreted as a written commitment to fully integrate women in the peace process in Haiti (United Nations Security Council, 2004d). However, as the mission advanced, it seems like the aspect of women as victims instead of agents in conflict resolution was more emphasized, as it can be noticed from the concern about the cases of sexual exploitation and abuse being expressed in documents such as UNSCR 1608 and 1743 (United Nations Security Council, 2005c; 2007b). Meanwhile, the percentage of female peacekeepers deployed in MINUSTAH remained low throughout the duration of the mission, only reaching an overall average of six per cent when the mission was coming to an end (United Nations Department of Peace Operations, 2017a).



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This research explores the integration of women in the uniformed components of MINUSTAH and the impact female peacekeepers had on the operation in order to discuss how the gender mainstreaming strategy has been advanced in UN peace operations. The study draws upon feminist theory to discuss how female participation and agency in conflict and conflict resolution has been restricted to essentialist perceptions of women's character and behaviour, such as the idea of women being "the very essence of peace" (Anderlini, 2007:1). The starting point of feminist security studies is that women's experiences of conflict and their relation to war are vastly different (Cohn, 2013:1), and that they are not naturally peaceful, even though they may be usually involved in fighting for peace (Wibben, 2014:750). The study argues that despite the acknowledgement of the importance of having more gender-balanced forces in peace operations, the language used in the mission's resolutions and in advocacy for female integration in peace operations in general sustains the idea that women are mostly victims of conflict. Therefore, gender stereotypes can end up being reinforced, consequently restricting women's agency as peacekeepers and maintaining men and masculinities mostly unaddressed and unacknowledged as part of the problem, turning the increase in the number of women deployed into a void attempt to achieve the goal of having more efficient peace forces.

## 1.2. Modern Multidimensional Peace Operations and Female Participation

The development of the peacekeeping mechanism is seen as a response to the lack of agreement between veto-holders in the Security Council during the Cold War, which was rendering the council unable to address the threats to international security by the means provided in the UN Charter (Fetherston, 1994). The persistent deadlock led the General Assembly to pass resolution 377 (United Nations General Assembly, 1950), known as resolution "uniting for peace", which allowed the General Assembly to act in place of the Security Council when the latter was unable to act due to the constant use of veto. Resolution 377 opened the precedent for the establishment of the first force-level operation in 1956, during the Suez Crisis (Fetherston, 1994:10-12). These traditional peace operations – those deployed until the 1980s – had the main function of monitoring and mediating conflicts to help prevent their escalation (Diehl & Druckman, 2010:63).



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Once the Cold War ended and the impasses in the Security Council were no longer a problem, resorting to the peacekeeping mechanism to respond to threats to peace became easier (Boutros-Ghali, 1992:201). However, in order to properly deal with the new international security context, the mechanism had to evolve into multidimensional peace operations with a stronger civilian and humanitarian component, as discussed by Goulding (1993) and Fetherston (1994). The multidimensional character of post-Cold War operations is expressed in the undertaking of new tasks such as the supervision of elections, the collection of weapons from insurgent groups, and distribution of humanitarian aid (Weiss Jr, 1993:54).

The increased importance of elements outside the military realm also caused an increase in the number of local women directly affected by the operations (Olsson, 2000:1) because troops now had more contact with the population of the countries where these missions were deployed. Olsson (2000:1) claims that this reality gave rise to the gender mainstreaming strategy in peace operations, as a way of dealing with gender-specific needs and, later, advance the discussion about female representation within the missions' personnel. As a result, since the adoption of resolution 1325, contributor countries have increased their deployment of female peacekeepers. However, this is happening at a very slow pace, especially regarding female presence among uniformed personnel. For the first 32 years after the deployment of the first force-level operation in 1956, only 20 women served in the military and police units of the active operations at that time (United Nations Department of Peace Operations, 2017b). By March 2019, women would account for about only five percent of the military contingent of the missions, and 5.35 percent by February 2020 (United Nations Department of Peace Operations, 2019a; 2020a).

### 1.3. The Gender Mainstreaming Strategy

Gierycz (2001:17) argues that discussions on women, peace and security were furthered in the post-Cold War scenario upon the expectations arising from the different new tasks that were being undertaken by international peace forces. The author claims that, by this time, a shift in the focus of feminist activism towards the importance of including women in peace-making processes could be noted, under the claim that despite being excluded from those areas of discussion women were still victims of war-



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related violence (Gierycz, 2001:17-18). Later, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) indicated a shift from "women" to "gender" in the peace and security terminology, gender being defined as the culturally and socially constructed roles assigned to individuals based on their biological sex (Jenkins & Reardon, 2007:212-213). The document calls for the mainstreaming of a gender perspective, that is, "assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels", as a way of achieving gender equality (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1997:24).

The UN's Women, Peace and Security Agenda pursues the overarching goal of achieving gender equality – meaning that women and men will have equal rights and responsibilities, and the needs, interests and priorities of both groups will be taken into consideration (United Nations Department of Peace Operations & United Nations Department of Field Support, 2018). The strategies employed by the Department of Peace Operations in the pursuit of this goal are gender mainstreaming and gender integration, prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and gender parity (United Nations Department of Peace Operations & United Nations Department of Field Support, 2018). Whereas gender mainstreaming means the assessment of how any policy or action will affect men and women, gender parity is understood as an indicator that measures the equal representation of both genders within a larger group (United Nations Department of Peace Operations & United Nations Department of Field Support, 2018). Thus, achieving gender parity can also be a sign that gender equality is being pursued, and became an important topic after UNSCR 1325 called for women's equal participation in peace processes.

UNSCR 1325 was adopted after a global campaign in favour of the inclusion of women in peace processes that had identified the Security Council as a main target, since its resolutions are usually binding on member states (Adrian-Paul, 2012:239-240). Adopted by the UNSC in 2000, 1325 was the first document to acknowledge women not only as victims but also as integral parts of peace processes, as NGOs advocating for it had intended (Cohn, Kinsella & Gibbings, 2004:131-132). The text of the resolution mentions the importance of women's role in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, the urgent necessity of mainstreaming a gender perspective in peace



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operations and requests that member states increase female representation in all decision-making levels and mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution (United Nations Security Council, 2000). One can conclude that this increased representation should also occur within the uniformed component of the operations. After 1325, other resolutions were adopted, complementing the UN Women, Peace and Security agenda. They are UNSCR 1820 (2008b), 1888 (2009b), 1889 (2009c), 1960 (2010c), 2106 (2013a), 2122 (2013c), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019a) and 2493 (2019b). Although most of them focus more generally on the prevention of violence and sexual exploitation and abuse against women, UNSCR 2122 (2013c), for example, explicitly encourages greater female participation in the military and police components of peace operations.

Recognized as a hierarchical organization, the military is said to have the purpose of training soldiers to kill and die for the state (Whitworth, 2004:151). Similarly, police officers constantly have to deal with situations that might require the use of violence. Having women assuming positions within these security institutions is therefore considered challenging because such positions defy the societal role women are supposed to play, a role based on the assumption that they are inherently peaceful (Kaufman & Williams, 2013:1-6). Despite recent changes, women have mostly been serving in UN peace operations as civilian staff, staying away from the field (Stiehm, 2001). When deployed among the uniformed components, women are usually assigned support roles, often within the administrative or medical staff (Mazurana, 2003; Jennings, 2011). Thus, despite being accepted as part of both the military and the police, in most cases women continue to have their action within these institutions limited to roles that are considered more "feminine". Feminist security studies tries to deconstruct the essentialist assumptions about gender roles that keep limiting the participation of women in issues related to conflict and peace through the basic premise that gender and the concepts of masculinity and femininity are socially constructed (Skjelsbæk, 2001), therefore, they are not fixed.

### 1.4. Feminism and Feminist Security Studies

Women have mostly been seen as passive and in need of protection (Anderlini, 2007), however, perceptions about male and female roles vary according to time and context



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(Whitworth, 1994). Women experience conflict in different ways, and their responses to conflict reveal specific characteristics of their femininities rendering importance to the study of the context in which femininities are constructed (Skjelsbæk, 2001). Because feminist theories are constructed out of the experiences of women in their varied circumstances, different views emerged within feminism itself, causing different categories of feminism to come into existence (Tickner, 1992:14-16). Among the different views inside feminism we could mention, as examples, critical feminism, feminist constructivism and feminist poststructuralism (Sjoberg, 2006). Nevertheless, all of these feminisms are based on the central argument of women's marginalization in social contexts (Blanchard, 2003:1292). Feminist Security Studies is seen as a pluralist – i.e. it draws on various feminist strands – and transformative sub-field with the purpose of raising problems without exactly solving them (Sjoberg, 2011). In Blanchard's (2003) point of view, it was from the interaction among these multiple feminisms that feminist security studies emerged. This research recognizes the contributions of the different strands of feminism and tries to adopt a conversational approach that draws upon these diversified views. For instance, the idea of emancipation entailed in critical feminism is considered important to this study, as is the postmodern and post-structural understanding that one needs to question binaries (e.g. man/woman, rational/emotional) that could limit agency and identity, and sustain a certain sense of subordination between categories (Gannon & Davies, 2007).

The involvement of feminists in the field of international security is connected to a number of topics that include, for instance, studies about the use of rape as a weapon of war (Copelon, 1995; Skjelsbæk, 2012). In this sense, feminist research can be considered focused on transforming the "gendered hierarchies inherent in relations of insecurity that make people vulnerable" (Basu, 2013:457). What feminist approaches do is analyse the language and symbolism applied to international relations discourse seeking to improve the understanding of existing practices (Keohane, 1989:245-246). This way, feminists have shown the existence of gender bias in concepts that are at the centre of security studies, such as the state, violence, war and peace. Thus, it is revealed that "neutral" discourses and theories are, in fact, based on male experiences. From the uncovering of gender bias in classical security ideas, feminists have reframed the meaning of security as a concept to cover the "effects of structural



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inequalities of race, class, and gender" (Tickner, 2006:24). In summary, feminist analyses question what might be deemed "traditional" or "natural" in order to expose how power imbalances came to be (Wibben, 2010:12). Feminist contributions appear in the form of analyses of the traditional contents and their reformulation, studies about the roles women can play in conflict and in peace processes, and in giving voice to new subjects or subjects that have been forgotten by mainstream theories and are revealed when gender is taken seriously (Sjoberg, 2009).

Because feminism relies on contextual analysis, it also does not follow a specific method of doing research. However, Tickner (2006:21-25), presents four methodological perspectives that guide feminist studies. Among them, the concern about the questions that are asked and the reasons why they are asked. Feminists ask questions that aim to understand the behaviour of the state, but they do so while also asking why women are not being acknowledged in issues that involve military and foreign policy, and why there are only few women occupying positions of power. As for war and peace, feminists question the reason why wars are mostly fought by men, and how gendered structures validate militarism and war. Another methodological guideline presented by Tickner is that feminism is concerned in developing research that is helpful to both women and men, and that is more impartial than traditional research, which is based only on the experiences of privileged men. In the words of Reinharz and Davidman (1992:248), elements of feminist research include bringing the subjects once marginalized to the centre of the study and making important what traditionally is considered trivial.

One of the most important feminist contributions to the field of security studies lies in the acknowledgement of the different roles that women can perform in international politics, and in conflict and conflict resolution more specifically. As argued by Cohn (2013:1) and previously mentioned in this chapter, it is important to consider the singularity of women's experiences of war. For instance, the adoption of pacifist practices by a group of women should not encourage the assumption that all women are pacifists, for there may be reasons found in women's contexts that pushes them to take part in supporting or fighting wars. If one wishes to understand women's relation



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to war, one should notice how factors such as age, sexuality, economic class, religion, physical ability, and others, can shape this relation (Wibben, 2014:750).

## 1.5. Research Problem and Question

As of 2019, women represented about five per cent of the total number of military and police personnel in active UN missions (United Nations Department of Peace Operations, 2019a). Arguments in favour of increasing female participation generally include the following: (i) women can make the troops more accessible to the population affected by the conflict, especially women and children; (ii) women's participation in peace processes make agreements easier to achieve, since women are seen as impartial mediators and (iii) peace agreements involving women tend to last longer (Bigio & Vogelstein, 2016:5-10; United Nations Regional Information Center for Western Europe, 2016).

Arguably the UN's success consists in setting examples to be followed by the international community (Fetherston, 1994:xvi). Therefore, the extent to which women are involved in peacekeeping is a representation of what is happening in the international environment as well as a means to settle international norms for the inclusion of women in conflict resolution and decision-making processes (Mowell, 2018). Despite the commitments assumed by the United Nations and its member states to increase women's participation in peace processes (Stiehm, 2001; United Kingdom Ministry of Defence, 2016), the number of female peacekeepers is still low. Hence, the main problem this study addresses is the gender gap in UN peace operations and the impact of having more women deployed.

The text of Resolution 1542, which established MINUSTAH, mentions Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in order to emphasize the mission's commitment with mainstreaming gender in all areas of the mission. However, it seems that during the 13 years of the operation, despite having had a Bangladeshi all-female police unit deployed in the field, the percentage of female peacekeepers remained low, only reaching an average of six per cent when the mission was coming to an end (United Nations Department of Peace Operations, 2017a). In addition to that, an assessment of resolutions adopted throughout the mission – UNSCR 1608 (2005c), 1702 (2006b),



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1743 (2007b) and 1820 (2008b), for example – reveals a strong concern with women as victims of rape, but there were few mentions of women as key actors in the peace process. The way this concern was expressed in the resolutions reinforces the idea of women as a "protected" category, even though they can be agents of conflict just as much as men (Whitworth, 2004:27; Tickner, 2006:24). In spite of the focus on women's need for protection, MINUSTAH is still remembered as one of the UN missions with the highest number of SEA cases (The New York Times Editorial Board, 2019; Rohter, 2020). The question that arises from this background is "how did female peacekeepers contribute to MINUSTAH's operational effectiveness?"

### 1.6. Aims and Objectives

This study discusses the contributions of having more women involved in peace operations, aiming at gaining a better understanding of some of the possible reasons to account for the difficulties in deploying more women peacekeepers. Its main argument is that simply increasing the number of women deployed in UN peace operations is not enough to achieve the goal of having more efficient peace forces. This study intends to (i) explore the evolution of peace operations; (ii) assess the conflict context of Haiti and the involvement of the UN in it; (iii) explore the gender mainstreaming strategy applied to MINUSTAH and the integration of female peacekeepers in the mission.

### 1.7. Research Design

This study applies a qualitative approach, which is of an exploratory nature and hence, offers the tools for more in-depth analyses (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009; Kumar, 2011), making it the most suitable approach to be applied to contextual analyses. The context in which MINUSTAH was deployed is very important to evaluate the mission's mandate, as well as the importance of including women in the peacebuilding process. The value of context to this research renders it to a qualitative approach, as it examines cases and meanings in specific settings (Neuman, 2007:176-177).

To better assess the gender gap and the perception of women in the military, a feminist perspective of security studies is adopted. Feminist theory is considered



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transformative as it links research to an agenda for political change that fights social oppression, and recognizes the centrality of gender as a category of analysis (Cresswell, 2003; Mertens, 2008). “Gender” is here conceptualized as a socially constructed set of beliefs about the behaviour of male and female individuals, hence, “gender roles” are archetypes of the way humans are expected to act in society according to their biological sex (Grant, R., 1991). By recognizing that gender is a social construct, feminist theory becomes important to this research as one of its goals is to understand the different views regarding women’s involvement in the military and the role they play in peace operations. Considering that different contexts give rise to different views on women and their roles in conflict and conflict resolution, this study draws on different strands of feminism in order to establish a dialogue among them that can serve as basis to understand different approaches to gender mainstreaming in peace operations.

This study undertakes a narrative literature review to engage with the body of knowledge on the topic. A narrative literature review can provide a report of events (Baumeister & Leary, 1997) that will help to contextualize the research. For the purposes of this study, such events would be the process that led to the Haitian crisis and consequently the presence of UN troops in Haitian territory. The first goal of developing a literature review is to gain insight on the topic (Cresswell, 2003). Also, it serves the purpose of identifying what has been written and providing a critical description and assessment of what is known (Jesson, Matheson & Lacey, 2011; Paré *et al.*, 2015). Through a literature review it is possible to evaluate information from previous works and discover important elements, allowing for building on prior writings (Grant, M.J. & Booth, 2009; Randolph, 2009).

Data regarding women in peacekeeping, social constructions of gender, peace operations (especially MINUSTAH) and the gender mainstreaming strategy adopted by the UN was collected from primary and secondary sources and included in the literature review in order to substantiate the research.



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## 1.8. Research Structure

This study is divided into six chapters. The first chapter serves as an introduction to the research theme, offering an overview of the literature on the evolution of UN peace operations, the gender mainstreaming strategy, feminist theory and the integration of women in the uniformed component of peace operations. It also addresses the methodology adopted in the study.

Chapter two mainly introduces the topic of how the UN peacekeeping mechanism emerged and evolved into the modern multidimensional peace operations deployed today. It divides peace operations in general into pre and post-Cold War operations to better show how the changes that occurred in peace missions relate to the changing context of international security.

Chapter three addresses the issue of women, conflict and peace. It discusses the most valued characteristics of a peacekeeper deployed in multidimensional operations and how they relate to characteristics that have long been considered "feminine". The chapter also presents a discussion of the female stereotypes that continue to be reinforced by the arguments most commonly used to justify the increased deployment of women in peace operations.

Chapter four offers a historical background that helps understand how the overall instability in Haiti came to be perceived as a threat to international peace and security, thus being used as a rationale for a series of UN interventions that preceded MINUSTAH. Addressing the previous missions deployed in Haiti helps to understand how MINUSTAH was received by Haitians.

Chapter five discusses MINUSTAH itself, its establishment and the approach adopted by the mission. It also addresses the participation of women peacekeepers within the mission's uniformed component. Since it is argued that female presence in a peace operation can help improve the relationship between peacekeepers and the host population (which is the basis for local legitimacy) and also serve as deterrent for the violent behaviour of their male counterparts, the chapter focuses specifically on the



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issues of MINUSTAH's local legitimacy and the various cases of sexual exploitation and abuse that marred the mission's image.

Chapter six concludes the study. It presents a summary of the main arguments and discusses the gaps that could be found in research regarding the topic of women in peace operations.



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# 2 FROM TRADITIONAL PEACEKEEPING TO MULTIDIMENSIONAL PEACE MISSIONS

## 2.1 Introduction

The greater integration of women in peace operations is often associated with the peacekeeping requirements of the post-Cold War period. Therefore, to understand how women came to be considered an invaluable asset for peace operations due to their unique "feminine nature", it is important to understand what characteristics of modern peace operations render such importance to female peacekeepers. The post-Cold War context presented challenges such as the rise in number of internal conflicts and civil wars, the emergence of newly independent states, and refugee crises which would require the UN peace forces to perform functions in the military, governmental or political, and civil aspects of a conflict (Boutros-Ghali, 1992:202-203; Goulding, 1993:456; Fetherston, 1994:23-34; Kenkel, 2013:127). These modern, complex peace missions would ultimately require a growing variety of skills, which according to Skjelsbæk (2007:3), offers a rationale for an increased number of women working in them. One central transformation was the grown importance of a more humanitarian approach in peace operations, which can be considered the main cause of the perceived increase in the number of women peacekeepers.

The changes in the peacekeeping mechanism led scholars to classify UN peace operations in different ways, usually based on the types of tasks peacekeepers must perform or the main goal of the operations. For instance, Fetherston (1994) discusses these missions according to the timeframe during which they were deployed, whereas Bellamy *et al.* (2010) divide them into five broad types according to the goals the missions intend to achieve. In turn, Kenkel (2013) divides them into five generations to show some sort of evolution of the UN mechanism over the years, while Goulding (1993) talks about six categories of peacekeeping. However, for the purposes of this study, operations will be divided only into *traditional peacekeeping*, i.e. missions deployed during the Cold War, and *modern peace operations*, i.e. missions that are considered multidimensional due to the different tasks they encompass.



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This chapter explores the context in which the peacekeeping mechanism was developed by the UN, as well as some of the tasks undertaken by the peacekeepers over the years. The aim is to discuss how these changes transformed peace operations and how women came to be considered role-model peacekeepers due to their assumed inherently peaceful nature.

The chapter offers a historical approach to the creation of the peacekeeping mechanism. It starts off by addressing the rise and fall of the League of Nations and the creation of the United Nations, in order to point out similarities and divergences between these organizations' approaches to maintaining international peace and security. Next, the creation of the peacekeeping mechanism as it is known today will be discussed, followed by the various adaptations it had to go through to better respond to the changing international context in the post-Cold War period. Lastly, the connection between peace operations and humanitarianism will be discussed, as it is perceived as one of the reasons for increased female participation in UN missions. This background is important because it adds to the discussion of how the inclusion of women in the uniformed components of UN peace operations in general, and MINUSTAH in particular (which will be discussed in chapters 3 and 5, respectively) came to be considered an important element for missions' success.

## 2.2 The Task of Maintaining International Peace and Security

History is marked by conflicts and attempts to achieve peace. The damage resulting from the first World War led to the creation of the League of Nations, an endeavour to build an inter-state system that could pursue the goal of preserving international peace (Henig, 2010:1-2). The League emerged as a complex organization, equipped to carry out various roles such as: (i) function as a body which would be prepared to resolve conflicts before they grew out of control; (ii) foster widespread disarmament; (iii) make sure that its members secured each other's territorial integrity and political independence; (iv) strive to inhibit the outbreak of conflicts by re-examining treaties, or by taking rapid and preventive action to resolve contentions between states; and (v) in case the League failed to prevent conflicts from happening, try to guarantee a peaceful result by making sure that members referred their disputes to be managed by the



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League's instruments or, in a worst-case scenario, restrain the fighting (Henig, 2010:42-47).

More general tasks were also part of the League's role (as per the Covenant's article 23) such as securing good conditions of labour for the people; secure the rightful treatment of native people in the territories controlled by members of the League; supervise the international commerce of arms and ammunition; and take measures to prevent the spread of diseases (League of Nations, 1919). The broad range of tasks gave the League the character of an organization that could approach the issue of conflict prevention in different ways. However, the work of the League ended up being mainly associated with its role of considering and trying to resolve disputes (Henig, 2010:47-51). Therefore, the organization was deemed a failure in face of the inability to deal with the cases of aggression that took place after its creation and, eventually, the inability to prevent the outbreak of the Second World War (Yurtsever & Hmaidan, 2019:449-450).

Eloranta (2011:28) credits the end of the League to two factors: (i) the failure to function as an alliance that would provide security guarantees for its members; (ii) the failure to achieve its disarmament goals. Paquin (1943:121) believes that the false assumption that internationalism had replaced nationalism as the main shaping force of states' policies is one of the reasons why the League of Nations has failed its purpose to preserve peace through inter-state cooperative action. The different agendas and expectations of states hindered the achievement of concrete results (Eloranta, 2011:32). For instance, Great Britain was supportive of German membership in the League, but it was opposed by the U.S. and France; Italy felt betrayed when its claims to territories in the Adriatic, the East and in Africa were not supported; and Japan was focused on consolidating its territorial and economic concessions, especially in China (Henig, 2019:54-55). It is believed that divergent perceptions also may have encouraged the adoption of more aggressive policies, especially by authoritarian regimes, and a subsequent arms race (Eloranta, 2011:28).

Such setting led to a series of events that announced the failure and the consequent end of the League. Examples of such include the Manchurian incident, the Abyssinia crisis, and the remilitarization of Rhineland (Paquin, 1943:122). Additionally, the non-



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ratification of the agreement by the U.S. government was not expected. In Paquin's (1943:124) view, the non-membership of such an important actor made the organization's success virtually impossible. The League of Nations was created based on the belief that all members in general, and the five powers (Britain, France, Italy, Japan and the United States) in particular, would share the responsibilities and obligations entailed in the League's covenant. Therefore, according to Henig (2010:57-58), any changes in such obligations or in the assumed membership of these five powers would transform the situation and result in a return to the previous state of affairs that prevailed in Europe before the post-war settlement.

The League slowly lost its credibility and was eventually replaced by the United Nations (UN), a new organization that was officially established just after the end of the Second World War. Similar to its predecessor, the main purpose of the UN, as specified in the first chapter of its Charter, is to maintain international peace and security (United Nations, 1945), also assuming its member states would act in concert (Fetherston, 1994:3). And in the same way that the Great Powers of the post-World War I were involved in the creation of the League of Nations, the victorious side of World War II had a great deal of involvement in developing the United Nations Charter and the organization's power structures. These powers put themselves in a position in which they would assume the largest roles in determining peace, guaranteeing that they would have the final saying in such important issues by having permanent representation and the right of veto in the Security Council, which in turn is the organ empowered to act in cases of (possible) breach of peace (Fetherston, 1994:8-16). As it will be shown later, for many years, the right of veto granted to these actors would restrain the UN's actions to prevent the outbreak and escalation of conflicts.

According to Urquhart (1990:196), the UN system has three central pillars: (i) the abstention of the use of force in inter-state relations; (ii) the peaceful resolution of conflicts; and (iii) the collective use of force, when needed, to manage situations that could threaten international peace. The latter is argued to be – along with the right of veto – one of the largest differences between the UN and the League of Nations (Weiss Jr, 1993:52). It means that, in case all peaceful means of conflict resolution fail, the UN is authorized, by chapter VII of its Charter, to use military means to restore and



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maintain international peace and security (Goulding, 1996:3). But the polarization within the Security Council during the Cold War, rooted in the rivalry between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., caused the organization's security role to be a function that was, in Weiss Jr's (1993:51) words, "largely underutilized".

The United Nations was envisioned as an organization that would facilitate cooperation among its member states, so its Charter was developed under the assumption that member states would act jointly (Fetherston, 1994:3). This is particularly true for the Security Council (SC) due to the fact that the five Great Powers occupying the permanent seats in the Council have the right to veto any proposed action (Wallensteen & Johansson, 2004:17). As the Security Council was given by the Charter the primary role when it comes to restoring international peace, the success of the UN would depend on these Great Powers reaching consensus, otherwise the collective security tools provided in the Charter would be of no use (Sarooshi, 1999; Henig, 2010).

The tensions among the members of the Council hindered the organ from fully exerting its functions (Wallensteen & Johansson, 2004:17). The lack of consensus among the five permanent members caused the enforcement measures provided by the Charter in its Chapter VII to be a politically unviable option for conflict resolution and many issues were to remain unattended (Fetherston, 1994:9-10). In the face of this unexpected situation within the SC, the United Nations had to adapt to the new international environment in order to take at least some action. Among the changes that followed were: (i) the expansion of the Secretary-General's role to that of an intermediary of crises – for instance, when Dag Hammarskjöld led the negotiations with the Chinese government for the release of U.S. airmen who had been condemned as spies (Urquhart, 2007:19-20); (ii) the adoption of new mechanisms of reconciliation; and (iii) the advent of the peacekeeping mechanism (Urquhart, 1990:197).

### 2.3 The Cold War and the Evolution of Peacekeeping

According to Booth (1998:29), it is possible to characterize the Cold War as being a confrontation between the Western world and the Soviet bloc, a dispute that became widespread and during which there was conflict in all types of relations, from



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ideological to military. Although the two protagonists refrained from engaging in direct armed conflicts against one another, the Cold War competition did involve organized violence within and between secondary states, as both the United States and the Soviet Union provided support to conflicts elsewhere (Barkawi, 2001:109-110). Since 1945, the number of intra-state conflicts began to outgrow the number of interstate conflicts each year (Harbom & Wallensteen, 2005:627) – 39 percent of such conflicts were related to issues of decolonization and to the rise of nationalism together (Fetherston, 1994:11). Booth (1998:33) argues that the Cold War itself was not the main reason behind these conflicts, but the mindset of the Great Powers during that period did help boost and extend confrontations, especially because there seemed to be a number of non-aligned states that were available to join one of the sides of the dispute (Ayoob, 1991:258). As a way of extending their influence, the Great Powers provided support to parties to conflicts, generally promoting the intensification of these conflicts. As examples of such, Barkawi (2001:109) mentions the Korean and Vietnamese wars, which could be classified as "internationalized civil wars" due to the involvement of both the U.S. and U.S.S.R. in the conflict. In general, out of the 165 active conflicts since the end of World War II, 36 involved troops from external countries (Harbom & Wallensteen, 2005:627).

Within this context of ongoing dispute between the United States and the Soviet Union, both permanent members of the Security Council and holders of the right to veto, there was little that could be done by the UN to deal with the emerging crises, as the SC was constantly found in a deadlock. Thus, in a similar way to what happened in the League days, when countries would pursue their interests in disregard of the compromises they were supposed to make to preserve peace, the interference of the Cold War dispute in UN's activities is a clear display of how national interest was still the most important force driving states' actions.

The intervention in the previously mentioned conflict in Korea is considered an exception, a case where the use of enforcement measures to manage a conflict was authorized, but was only possible because the Soviet Union had decided to boycott the Security Council after the advance of troops from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) towards Seoul (Fetherston, 1994:10). The SC considered



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the action a threat to peace under chapter VII of the Charter, and a recommendation was made for member states to send military assistance that would aid the Republic of Korea (Goulding, 1996:4). By 1952, over fifteen member states had agreed to send their militaries in the field under the command of the United States, as requested by the Security Council in its Resolution 84 (Goodrich, 1953:94), which further authorized the operation to act under the UN flagship (United Nations Security Council, 1950). Once the Soviet boycott came to an end, the SC became deadlocked again. Hence, in order to guarantee the continuation of the operation in Korea a resolution was passed authorizing the General Assembly to act in place of the Security Council (Fetherston, 1994:11). Hardly surprising, the passing of the resolution could count on the lobbying of the United States' representatives (Woolsey, 1951:130, 133).

Resolution 377 (V), also known as resolution "Uniting for Peace", was passed by the General Assembly in November 1950 as an attempt to guarantee that the UN would be able to play its security role despite the impasses in the Security Council. The text discusses the competency of the Security Council in the exercise of its primary function, calling for consensus amongst its members in order to restrain the use of veto (United Nations General Assembly, 1950). The constant use of the veto, as previously discussed, was the main cause of the deadlock that prevented the Council to fully comply with its responsibilities in acting for the maintenance of peace and security. Hence, the Resolution establishes that if there is an impasse between the permanent members, leading the Security Council to fail in its responsibility of maintaining international peace and security in face of a threat, the General Assembly can then attend to the matter in order to make recommendations for collective action (United Nations General Assembly, 1950). It was the passing of this resolution that allowed UN forces to remain in Korea and established a precedent that later would allow the first force level UN operation to be established in 1956 during the Suez crisis.

## 2.4 Cold War Peacekeeping

The peacekeeping mechanism was described by Urquhart (1990:197) as "the non-forceful use of soldiers as a catalyst for peace." The first mission of the type was the United Nations Truce Supervision Operation (UNTSO), which was established in 1948 to help supervise the already negotiated truce between Israel and its Arab neighbours



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(Goulding, 1993:452). Resolution 50, which establishes UNTSO, called for a ceasefire between the parties to the conflict and decided that this ceasefire should be supervised by a UN mediator along with military observers (United Nations Security Council, 1948). The mandate of UNTSO reflects the original function of peacekeeping: monitoring ceasefires and truce agreements (Urquhart, 1990:198). The period from 1946 – 1956 is considered by Fetherston (1994:16) to be the nascent period of peacekeeping, during which the foundation for the mechanism was laid.

The following years – from 1956 to 1967 – constituted the assertive period, the most active period for UN operations throughout the Cold War, during which eight new missions were established (Fetherston, 1994:16). The first of these missions was also the first force-level UN operation: the United Nations Emergency Force I (UNEF I), deployed in Egypt in 1956 with the task of dealing with the attack on the country (Goulding, 1993:452), also known as the Suez Crisis. The establishment of UNEF I was possible because of the previously mentioned Resolution “Uniting for Peace”. As France and Great Britain, both involved in the dispute, continued to exercise their right to veto – in yet another example of how states would continue to pursue their own interests in detriment of the their responsibilities as members of the SC – the General Assembly took the lead in establishing the new operation (United Nations Department of Public Information, 2003). Different from previous missions, UNEF I was composed of a fully-armed contingent deployed in the field to oversee the withdrawal of external forces, setting an important precedent for future operations (Kenkel, 2013:126).

Even though the two operations mentioned above (UNTSO and UNEF) did have their differences in context and mandate, as operations established during the Cold War they are both defined as “traditional” or “first generation” peacekeeping – operations that would be deployed under chapter VI of the Charter and that would follow three principles: (i) consent, meaning that the parties involved in the conflict had to agree with the establishment of the mission; (ii) impartiality, i.e. none of the parties would be favoured by the mission and its personnel; and (iii) non-use of force, except for self-defence purposes (Kenkel, 2013:126). During the first four decades of its existence (1945 – 1985), the UN deployed a total of 13 peace operations (table 2.1), but with the phasing out of the Cold War by the end of the 1980s, cooperation among the Great



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Powers in the Security Council seemed more possible and the number of UN operations could be increased (Weiss Jr, 1993:54).

Table 2.1: UN Peace Operations from 1948 to 1989

| MISSION | PLACE OF DEPLOYMENT | YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT |
|---|---|---|
| United Nations Truce Supervision Operation (UNTSO) | Palestine | 1948 |
| United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) | India, Pakistan | 1949 |
| United Nations Emergency Force I (UNEF I) | Egypt | 1956 |
| United Nations Observation Group in Lebanon | Lebanon | 1958 |
| United Nations Operation in Congo (ONUC) | Congo | 1960 |
| United Nations Security Force (UNSF) | West New Guinea | 1962 |
| United Nations Yemen Observation Mission (UNYOM) | Yemen | 1963 |
| United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) | Cyprus | 1964 |
| Mission of the Representative of the Secretary-General in the Dominican Republic (DOMREP) | Dominican Republic | 1965 |
| United Nations India-Pakistan Observation Mission (UNIPOM) | India, Pakistan | 1965 |
| United Nations Emergency Force II (UNEF II) | Egypt | 1973 |
| United Nations Disengagement Observing Force (UNDOF) | Israel, Syria (Golan Heights) | 1974 |



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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) | Lebanon | 1978 |
| United Nations Good Office Missions in Afghanistan and Pakistan (UNGOMAP) | Afghanistan | 1988 |
| United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG) | Iran, Iraq | 1988 |
| United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM) | Angola | 1988 |
| United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) | Namibia | 1989 |
| United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) | Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua | 1989 |

*Source: https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/unpeacekeeping-operationlist_1.pdf*

## 2.5 Post-Cold War Peacekeeping

Despite having relatively more freedom to act because now agreement between members would be more easily reached, the Security Council had to face several new challenges for which the UN system was not prepared. In an account of the missions deployed between 1948 and 1978, and observing the changes in the international context, Urquhart (1990:198-199) had already pointed out some matters that the UN and its personnel would have to address. To exemplify the coming era, he listed situations such as the growing instability in some countries' domestic politics, armed disputes between antagonist groups in the same territory, lack of governmental authority, and exposure of UN troops to increasing levels of violence. Interstate conflicts were less common, but the overall number of armed conflicts had grown and most of them were protracted intra-state disputes considered a major threat to international peace, and to which the articles of the UN Charter could not be easily



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applied (Fetherston, 1994:20, 43). Following the trend of the conflicts that emerged during the Cold War, these “new wars” occur mostly in third world countries, which makes these peripheral states the main target of foreign intervention.

The changes that the peacekeeping mechanism had to go through in the post-Cold War era could be divided into two types: demand and supply (Kenkel, 2013:127). In the first case, demand for peace operations increased mainly due to (i) the withdrawal of the Great Powers’ support for proxy wars, leading peripheral countries to a process of political transition, and (ii) the fall of communist regimes in Europe, which ignited ethnic struggles. At the same time, supplying international intervention became easier once the Cold War dispute had ended and consensus among Security Council members regarding the organization and deployment of operations became more feasible (Kenkel, 2013:127). The result is that between 1988 and 2012, 54 new missions were established by the UN (Hatto, 2013:496). In other words, in comparison with the deployments of the first four decades of the UN’s existence, in almost half of the time, the number of UN missions more than doubled. The numbers turn out to be even more impressive when one realizes that in only four years (from 1988 to 1992) 18 new missions were established – 13 of them were multidimensional operations, which means they were explicitly mandated to manage the socio-political and/or humanitarian aspects of the conflict (Fetherston, 1994:23).

In the beginning, peace operations were largely military both in their tasks and composition, however, the new context in which the organization would act was one involved: (i) newly independent states emerging; (ii) the rise of regional and continental groups, representing new forms of cooperation among states, but also the rise of nationalism, ethnic, religious and social struggles; (iii) technological progress that would improve communication and make more people aware of developments around the globe, however, at the same time, also cause more environmental damage; (iv) increased proliferation of arms (both conventional and of mass destruction); (v) higher numbers of refugees and displaced people as a consequence of massive migration, usually caused by poverty, disease, famine and oppression (Boutros-Ghali, 1992:202-203). The issues highlighted by Boutros-Ghali point to a shift in the definition of security – problems that do not necessarily emerge from the military realm were also being



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considered threats to stability and peace. Thus, in order to better address these matters, missions deployed after 1988 also began to include civilian elements (Goulding, 1993:456).

Many of the crises the UN had to address were related to civil war. The settlement of this type of conflict usually requires a range of activities that go from impartial monitoring of elections to helping reforming the country's institutions, as well as demobilization, disarmament and reintegration of combatants, repatriation of refugees and humanitarian assistance (Goulding, 1993:457; Hatto, 2013:496). Due to these new complex tasks, peacekeeping missions evolved into complex multidimensional peace operations that normally involve not only a strong military component but also police, refugee, humanitarian, electoral, and political components (Howard, 2008:1). Multidimensional peace operations are relevant tools because they "reflect the range of actions and capabilities that the UN has tried to develop over time", and have the potential for combining various elements necessary for ending complex civil wars (Howard, 2008:4-5).

UN multidimensional peace operations expanded to include a multiplicity of functions in the military, governmental or political, and civil aspects of a conflict. As listed by Fetherston (1994:23-34), the military functions would include, among others, observing ceasefires; supervising the withdrawal of forces; verifying security agreements; disarming warring factions; and escorting humanitarian aid delivery. Governmental and political tasks would comprise protecting territorial integrity; guaranteeing political independence; supporting the establishment of a viable government; providing security to the people; negotiating with non-governmental entities; and others. The civil aspect of the mission includes the provision of humanitarian assistance and of confidence-building measures; the monitoring and regulation of the flow of refugees; the training of local police forces and management of local disputes. Fetherston also calls attention to the fact that, despite some of these activities being exclusive of the military, the military personnel normally perform various functions pertaining other categories as well (Fetherston, 1994:23-34). It is in face of the expanded role of uniformed peacekeeping forces that women's contributions to peace operations began to receive more attention. Skjelsbæk (2007:3) claims that the need for more women in the military



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stems precisely from new security challenges, and that having more women integrated in military forces is a way to secure that troops have a varied range of qualifications.

### 2.6 Peace Operations and Humanitarianism

According to late Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali (1992:203), the new reality of the international context required new goals to be pursued by the UN: (i) identify situations that could trigger conflict and try to end such risk by diplomatic means; (ii) in cases where conflict has emerged, work together with the parties to resolve the issues that caused it; (iii) where conflict has been halted by ceasefire or truce agreements, work to preserve the peace; (iv) engage in actions to rebuild the institutions and infrastructure of countries that have been affected by conflict and help strengthen the peaceful relations between former warring parties (Boutros-Ghali, 1992:203). These goals represent, respectively, the four core dimensions of UN action to maintain and restore international peace, which are: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding. Together, they result in an integrated approach to security that is supposed to involve not only the Security Council but also the General Assembly and other organs of the organization, as well as non-governmental agencies, regional organizations and individual states.

Goulding (1993:456) divides UN peace operations into six different categories (table 2.2), a classification according to the type of tasks performed and the situation in which these operations are deployed. Considering the complexity and variety of tasks performed by UN peacekeepers taking part in post-Cold War operations, these operations could be considered mainly a mix of Goulding's types three and five. In type three operations, UN personnel would have to (i) monitor ceasefires; (ii) disarm and demobilize combatants; (iii) form, train and supervise armed and police forces; (iv) make sure that human rights are not being violated; (v) supervise elections; (vi) supervise or even assume control of the country's administration, etc. As for type five operations, they have both peacemaking and peacebuilding dimensions, and are usually deployed in countries where institutions may be at the verge of collapsing (Goulding, 1993:457-459).



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Table 2.2: Goulding's Types of Peace Operations

| Type of Operation | Characteristics |
|---|---|
| 1 | UN troops are deployed before the conflict actually starts, usually at the request of one of the parties. It is intended that the presence of international troops raise the political cost of an eventual aggression. |
| 2 | Traditional operations that aim to support peacemaking and help create an environment conducive to negotiation. Activities carried out by peacekeepers include controlling buffer zones and monitoring ceasefires. |
| 3 | Deployed after an agreement has been reached, type 3 operations entail various activities, old and new, such as monitoring ceasefires, demobilizing troops, forming and training new armed forces, supervising elections, monitoring human rights, etc. |
| 4 | Established to support the delivery of humanitarian relief supplies while conflict is taking place. |
| 5 | Entail both peacemaking and post-conflict peacebuilding efforts. They are deployed in countries where institutions may be at the verge of collapsing. Type 5 operations require a comprehensive program that include delivery of humanitarian relief, monitoring of ceasefires, rebuilding of political and administrative structures, economic rehabilitation, etc. |
| 6 | Considered a more forceful variant of traditional peacekeeping because UN troops have permission to use force against any party who violates a ceasefire or any other military arrangements. |

One of the greatest commonalities among the multidimensional missions deployed after 1988 is the growing importance of their humanitarian component. According to Butler (1991:3), among the reshaping forces of the post-Cold War period is the intensification of “intractable conflicts”, which are defined by Kriesberg (1993:147) as disputes related to ethnic and religious differences. These conflicts can also have corruption, poverty, dislocation, disease, and state collapse as outcomes, or end up igniting new conflicts (Howard, 2008:1). According to Weiss Jr (1993:56-57), it was after the losses of the civil war that emerged in Iraq after the Iraq-Kuwait war that the



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Security Council first linked humanitarian issues to international peace and security. In Resolution 688, adopted in April 1991, the members of the SC declared that they were "deeply disturbed by the magnitude of human suffering" and that the consequences of the repression against the Iraqi civilian population represented a threat to international peace and security in the region (United Nations Security Council, 1991). Since then, humanitarianism has been one of the driving forces of many operations, to the point of having greater value than the principle of non-intervention (Weiss Jr, 1993:56-57).

The growing importance of human rights and humanitarian tasks in UN peace operations reflects a much-needed shift from a state-centred approach to security to a human security one. The human security approach perceives that the security of the state, although important, is not enough for guaranteeing stability and the well-being of its people, but the security of people is essential to the maintenance of international peace and security (Axworthy, 2001:20). It is important to notice however, that despite the good intentions that may exist in the deployment of humanitarian operations, humanitarianism can still also serve as rationale for foreign interventions that have political goals other than the protection of human rights. For instance, the 2011 military intervention in Libya, although justified in terms of protecting human rights of the Libyan people, proved to be actually in pursuit of a regime change in the country (Pattison, 2011; Kuperman, 2013). Scholars agree that the Libya intervention was an example of the *responsibility to protect* (R2P) concept put into action (Bellamy & Williams, 2011; Pattison, 2011; Weiss, 2011; Kuperman, 2013; Terry, 2015). Unanimously adopted by UN member states in 2005, R2P is based on the idea that states are responsible for defending their nationals from crimes against humanity in general, and in case a state fails to do so, this responsibility is transferred to international community, who should guarantee people's security by resorting to the means provided in the UN Charter (Bellamy & Williams, 2011:827).

In Rieff's (2003:120) view, at the end of the Cold War, European countries and the United States perceived humanitarianism as "the last coherent saving ideal." He understands "state humanitarianism" as a military tool that states can use to pursue its interests. The same strategy is characterized by Zehfuss as "ethical war" and can be associated with the proactive interventionist strategy of Western powers, who took



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upon themselves the responsibility to fix world's problems (Zehfuss, 2018 cited in Edkins, 2019:76). Such interventionism replicates the well-known idea that those who are more prosperous help the ones in need (Rieff, 2003:57) – an idea that has been at the core of many colonial and imperialist endeavours. However, different from what is expected, sometimes such action ends up resulting in more violence (Edkins, 2019:76). The aforementioned military intervention in Libya, for example, ended up exacerbating and extending the conflict. Had NATO not intervened, predictions show that the conflict would had lasted for about six weeks and killed around 1,110 people; however, the outcome was that the conflict lasted for 36 weeks and around 8,000 Libyans were killed, according to an official statement issued by the U.S. government (Kuperman, 2013:122). It is paramount that humanitarian intervention is part of a broader strategy of reconstruction and restructuring of a conflict-torn nation in order to fall within what Fetherston (1994:105) characterizes as "problem-solving conflict resolution", where the underlying causes of conflict are addressed in order to prevent relapse.

Operations deployed to deal with the aforementioned complexities are more robust missions combining more permissive use of force with enhanced civilian tasks with the aim of, once conflict ends, helping consolidate peace and restructure the host-country's institutions to avoid setbacks (Kenkel, 2013:132-133). Nowadays, modern UN peace operations usually have three pillars – the Special Representative of the Secretary-General is the embodiment of the operations' political pillar; the blue helmet troops constitute the military pillar; and, finally, agencies such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or the United Nations Development Programme) (UNDP) form the humanitarian pillar (Hatto, 2013:510). It is also noticeable that, over the years, the participation of the UN civilian staff, as well as regional and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in UN peace operations has increased (Hatto, 2013:497). Even though the number of civilian personnel working in peace operations has escalated over the years, there are many roles that can still be played by the military in UN missions, including humanitarian ones, which is why this component of peace missions still of great importance even in less militarized environments. This importance is linked to the fact that the military is an organization with strong internal control and access to well-trained personnel, technology and



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crucial resources, which makes it capable of promptly responding to various types of crises and turn humanitarian relief into a more effective operation (Weiss & Campbell, 1991:452; Heaslip & Barber, 2016; Fernandez & Suthikarnnarunai, 2017).

Peace operations involving a humanitarian component are identified by Slim (1996:87-88) as the "military humanitarian policy of the UN", and have five major objectives: (i) prevent conflict; (ii) guarantee or deny movement of people in the area by creating blockades or safe-havens, for example; (iii) protect the delivery (or deliver) humanitarian aid; (iv) supervise the establishment of a comprehensive settlement by undertaking tasks such as disarmament and demobilization, election supervision and security sector reform; (v) provide military assistance to civil structures in weak or failed states (Slim, 1996:91). In Peou's (2002:51) point of view, UN peace operations should be understood as part of a larger theoretical framework, which is based on the concept of "collective human security", that is, the idea that it is possible to achieve human security through collective interventionist action. In this sense, based on the approach adopted in the Brahimi Report (United Nations General Assembly, 2000), peacekeeping and peacebuilding become methods for promoting human security through the fast deployment of UN forces to help stabilize peace in the first weeks after conflict has been halted, and through actions that would result in improvement of the quality of life for people living in conflict areas (Peou, 2002:56).

The new character of peace operations and the humanitarian approach adopted would put peacekeepers in close contact with the civilian population. Some UN operations deployed in the late 1990s and 2000s were explicitly mandated to protect civilians exposed to the threat of physical violence (Holt, Taylor & Kelly, 2010:18). It is argued that guaranteeing the security of civilians is considered crucial to the legitimacy and credibility of an operation among the host population and the international community alike, and also crucial to the legitimacy and credibility of the UN itself (Holt, Taylor & Kelly, 2010:22-23). Indeed, many authors cite local and external support, as well as a good relationship between the population and the peacekeepers, as relevant factors to missions' success (Fetherston, 1994; Korson, 2015; Gippert, 2016). Therefore, Holt, Taylor and Kelly (2010:23) affirm that "successful missions are those that deal with the protection of civilians as an integrated part of their aims." As the majority of the civilian



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population is comprised of women and children, that slowly raised awareness to the specific needs of these groups and their exacerbated vulnerability during war time. Therefore, to better address these issues, appeals for greater integration of women in peace and conflict issues started to emerge (Gierycz, 2001; Cohn, Kinsella & Gibbings, 2004; Pratt & Richter-Devroe, 2011).

### 2.7 Conclusion

The post-Cold War period saw the rise in the number and intensity of conflicts that no longer followed the traditional pattern of inter-state wars. To address the complexity of this new context, UN peace missions had to go through adaptations that transformed them into complex multidimensional operations that would not only keep the peace between belligerent actors, but also deal with the civil and political aspects of the conflict. This caused an increase in the civilian component of missions but also meant that uniformed peacekeepers had their range of tasks expanded to include activities such as disarmament and demobilization, the overseeing of elections and delivery of humanitarian aid, for example. This change also addresses the expansion of the definition of threats to international peace and security to include matters of political conflicts such as that in Haiti – a case that will be discussed further in chapter 4.

While carrying out new functions such as delivering humanitarian aid and overseeing elections, peacekeepers would consequently interact more with the host population, a situation that reinforced the concern about how peace operations impact the local people. In this sense, the specific needs of women and children, as they account for most of the civilian population of the countries, became central to the development of peacekeeping policies. As a result from the acknowledgement of the specific ways in which women are affected by conflict, the concept of gender mainstreaming gained momentum within peace operations and served as basis for the development and implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. One of the areas discussed within the agenda is how women can contribute to peace processes and, consequently, how more gender-balanced peacekeeping forces could contribute to the effectiveness of peace operations.



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The next chapter will connect the adaption of peace processes to gender mainstreaming and how that culminated in UNSCR 1325 and other strategies to include more women in the uniformed components of peace missions. It also presents the arguments in favour of having more female peacekeepers deployed in the field, including how they could improve the relationship between peacekeepers and the host population. This helps explain why gender parity was considered important in a controversial mission such as MINUSTAH, and ultimately contributes to answering the question raised by this study, which is “what was the impact of the female peacekeepers deployed in MINUSTAH?”



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# 3 WOMEN, CONFLICT AND PEACE OPERATIONS

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the connection between the evolution of the peacekeeping mechanism and the emergence of the gender mainstreaming discourse in general, and the arguments for women's integration into the uniformed components of peace operations. Firstly, the chapter addresses the new tasks that were included in peace operations over time and how they impacted the understanding of who should be considered a good fit for the peacekeeping job. Secondly, the integration of women into peacekeeping forces is discussed through an analysis of the stereotypes that sustain the assumed "inherent" connection between women and peace. This chapter is concluded by a discussion about resolution 1325, which is considered a turning point for the Women, Peace and Security agenda, as it was the first resolution to acknowledge the disproportional ways in which women are affected by conflict as well as the important role women can play in conflict resolution.

## 3.2 The Good Peacekeeper

UN peace operations emerged and evolved in an *ad hoc* manner, i.e. they were never guided by a specific set of rules besides the three previously mentioned principles that guided peacekeepers' actions: consent of the parties, impartiality and non (or minimal) use of force. The new operations organized after the Cold War, in order to address the issues of the period, had to include new tasks that "touched on the most delicate issues of military psychology, national sovereignty, international politics, and national and international law." (Urquhart 1987, cited in Findlay, 1996:22). Some of the new tasks that were included in post-Cold War peace operations are: mine clearance and awareness; separation of combatants and demarcation of buffer zones; military and police training; election organization and observation; reconstruction and development; repatriation of refugees; provision and delivery of humanitarian assistance or the protection thereof; promotion and protection of human rights (Findlay, 1996:26).



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In face of this new multifunctional character, distinguishing peacemaking from peacekeeping, peace enforcement and peacebuilding as Boutros-Ghali (1992) did becomes a complex task. As the importance of the civilian component of UN missions grew, the military character of such missions appeared to have been to be minimized (Findlay, 1996:29). However, it does not mean the military component of these missions became less important or was suddenly out of the picture. In fact, military contingents usually outnumber the civilian personnel and civilian police contingents of UN peace operations (Simic, 2009:399-400), but now military personnel have to deal also with this new range of tasks that require a more cooperative approach (Findlay, 1996:29). For soldiers who, during training, are taught to use force in combat, it might be hard to adjust to the demands of a peace operation as their self-conceptions as military professionals and their identity images are challenged (Franke, 2003:32).

With relation to one of the major new tasks undertaken – the delivery of humanitarian aid or the protection thereof – even militaries that usually assist in disaster relief in their home countries may not have the necessary experience to deal with moving an enormous amount of supplies while conflict is happening (Findlay, 1996:27). In other cases, military personnel may have trouble coping with the witnessing of human rights violations, and their institutions may not be prepared to offer support so they can cope with certain situations (Findlay, 1996:27). Soldiers are also restricted from responding violently to attacks they might suffer, having to refrain from acting in the way they were taught (Franke, 2003:34). In sum, to be successful in their peacekeeping tasks, soldiers must be able to function well in an environment where minimal use of force is required, so their strength will lie in their ability to negotiate and compromise, which might cause psychological ambiguities for highly trained warriors (Wisher, 2003:92). According to Skjelsbæk (2007:27), the requirement for new areas of expertise that emerges from the changed character of UN peace operations offers one more reason for increasing the number of women peacekeepers – they can add to the variety of skills of the operations' personnel and make these operations more effective.

Nevertheless, war fighting remains being considered one of the most important skills in peace operations, which makes soldiers the main professionals to assume the role of peacekeepers (Franke, 2003:35). This idea is clearly expressed in the words of the



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former commander of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) George Joulwan, quoted in Franke (2003:35), who claims that warriors are good peacekeepers because they are able to understand and move quickly to the next step. This means that soldiers are regarded as good peacekeepers because they are good at receiving orders and promptly obeying them. For Whitworth (2004:3), however, having soldiers as peacekeepers is the biggest contradiction of peacekeeping, since soldiers are not born but rather made in an environment that celebrates and reinforces hostile and unsafe elements of masculinity that tend to encourage violence and prejudice against gender, sexuality and race. Simic (2009:401) also questions whether soldiers are indeed the best professionals to be peacekeepers, since they are trained to use violence and tactics of war and, therefore, they would lack what a peacekeeper needs the most: empathy and peaceful behaviour. In turn, Duncanson (2009:77) believes that there is an ideal model of soldier which is based on a type of hegemonic peacekeeper masculinity that emerges from the activities undertaken in peace operations: the soldier who is able to combine positive elements from his military training such as steadfastness, bravery and ambition with qualities considered 'feminine' such as empathy, caring and patience.

### 3.3 Women in Peacekeeping

As discussed in the previous chapter, after the end of the Cold War, not only the number of UN peace operations increased, but also the character of these operations changed: from small military observation missions they became larger multifunction forces (Skjelsbæk, 2007:27). This shift was necessary so UN peace operations could be more effective in face of the changing nature of conflict itself. Traditional conflict, in the sense of a confrontation between two heavily armed forces from different countries, gave room to "low-intensity" conflicts which resulted in a larger number of civilian casualties (Lee, B., 2008:59). Pankhurst (2004:9) states that even the prevalence of the term "conflict" instead of "war" is a reflection of the complex contexts in which modern disputes occur: for instance, besides the civilian casualties, violence may not be employed in a continuous way, and residential areas can easily become battlefields.



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This new context resulted in increased international concern regarding humanitarianism and, hence, the need to add new functions – such as repatriation of refugees, provision and delivery of humanitarian assistance and promotion and protection of human rights – for peacekeepers to perform (Findlay, 1996:26). The conversation with regard to women, peace and security was furthered in the post-Cold War period upon the expectations arising from the different new tasks that were being undertaken by international peace forces (Gierycz, 2001:17). These new tasks would put the UN troops in greater contact with the population of the host nations, hence, the number of local women directly affected by the operations would also increase (Olsson, 2000:1). The importance of including women in peace processes began to be highlighted under the allegation that, despite being excluded from discussions about security, peace and conflict, women were still victims of war-related violence (Gierycz, 2001:17-18). It is claimed that this reality gave rise to the gender mainstreaming strategy applied to peace operations, which became closely related to women and their specific needs (Olsson, 2000:1).

Conceptually, "gender" is related to social perceptions of what should be the appropriate behaviour of individuals according to their biological sex (Biever *et al.*, 1998:168). The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) defines gender mainstreaming as "the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels" (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1997). Therefore, following a gender mainstreaming strategy means adopting a gendered approach while crafting legislation and policies and when applying them. Even though gender mainstreaming is not directly linked to increased female representation in peacekeeping, having more women participating in these operations is an important part of this larger strategy (Jennings, 2011:2). Mazurana (2003:64) believes that increasing the number of women peacekeepers is not enough to change the gendered structure of peace missions, but it can positively impact the relationship between mission's staff and the local population of the host nation, as well as improve the perceptions regarding these missions. However, the low number of women involved in peacekeeping and the fact that they rarely occupy positions that put them in direct contact with the community



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make it difficult to analyse the real impact of women peacekeepers in the host-society (Jennings, 2011:5-6).

When thinking about the socialization of male and female individuals and the expected behaviour they are supposed to adopt, one can assume that the traditional relationship between military duty and masculinity pointed out by Skjelsbæk (2007:13) is behind the fact that women account for a significant number of the civilian population and consequently they comprise a significant number of the civilian casualties in these new conflicts (Sutton & Novkov, 2008:16). Therefore, discussions about gender and conflict have been focused on the protection of women against structural and direct forms of violence (Skjelsbæk, 2007:24). Sjoberg (2006:891) explains that this perception of women being those most in need of protection has its origins in the gendered assumptions regarding women's role in warfare.

### 3.3.1 The stereotypical peaceful essence of women

There is a historical link between women and peace that arises from traditional images of women as mothers, nurturers, caretakers and innate peacemakers (Carroll, 1987). Some women's movements since the nineteenth century would resort to "natural" female values that would associate femininity with passivity and pacifism (Brown, 2003:1-2). As givers of life, it would be only "natural" that women oppose all forms of destruction of lives (Key, 1916 cited in Carroll, 1987:7-8). The biological reality that women can bear children has been consistently used to associate them with peaceful behaviour. According to Jenkins and Reardon (2007:215), the rationale that links motherhood to pacifism emerged during the American Civil War in the mid-nineteenth century, when the "Mothers Proclamation" was promulgated – a document in which women pledged to raise their sons not to take the lives of other mothers' sons. "Motherism" is a traditional approach to women's role during war and relies on the idea that women would be inherent supporters of peace due to their being nurturing and protective of their children (York, 1996:323). War is contrary to women's natural role of mothers, hence, women must unite to demand its end (York, 1996:323). However, Ruddick (1980:346) explains that "maternal" is a social category that is not necessarily linked to biological parenting, i.e. giving birth to a child is neither mandatory nor



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sufficient for an individual to develop “maternal thinking”, which arises, in fact, from childcare practices. This thinking is governed by the mother’s interest in satisfying the demands of a child for preservation, growth and acceptability (Ruddick, 1980:347-348).

Within a family, it is women who are usually responsible for educating young people and teaching the set of values under which they are going to live their adult lives (Pankhurst, 2004:31). If mothering indeed naturally opposes militarism, women would raise their sons to oppose war (Scheper-Hughes, 1996:358). However, in some cases, women encourage and even pressure their husbands and sons to embrace violence making family one of the institutions that help promoting certain types of masculinity (Pankhurst, 2004:31). The reason for this might arise from the very social structure in which these women live. Scheper-Hughes (1996) argues that some mothering experiences, especially those under conditions of scarcity, political disruption or oppression, may make women more prone to surrender their male relatives to war. As stated by Turpin (1998:4), depending on their economic status, home society, and ethnicity, women may or may not be more vulnerable to the effects of militarization and war. They may either be reproducing the idea that men’s role is to fight and defend their country while their role as women is to support their men to do so, or because having their male relatives in the military will improve their social condition and even status.

Besides failing to explain women’s support for war and militarism, according to Charlesworth (2008:349) arguments that promptly connected women and peace due the “female nature” result in a “deterministic account of human nature” that also fails to explain cases of women who are in the battle front. Throughout history, women have acted as support personnel and fighters. Sjoberg (2010:57-58) lists some ancient conquests where women took part and states that they still participate in modern conflict, even though their participation usually goes unnoticed for most of the time. Another example of the different roles women can play in warfare is the case of the American female soldiers involved in the torture of Iraqi prisoners back in 2003. Enloe (2004:91) states that these women’s involvement in the events was considered shocking by the public exactly because they did not represent the traditional war roles



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assigned to women. According to Sjoberg (2010:58), when women are recognized as perpetrators of violence, their agency is usually "associated with flaws in their femininity, maternity, physiology, or sexuality" because it is necessary for women to remain, at least to some extent, being portrayed as innocent outsiders in war-making.

Turpin (1998:13) argues that there is no proof of an "essential" nature for neither men nor women – humans in general have the capacity to be either peaceful or violent, and gender, as a fluid social category, can be expressed in different ways according to the cultural contexts in which individuals are embedded. That is, the roles assigned to individuals based on their identity as male or female are related to the social context of this individual and can be socially constructed, shaped and changed. Therefore, if identity is relational, built on the construction of an opposite other (Fierke, 2007:76), then the female identity must be what the male identity is not. This assumption is the source of antithetical behaviours associated with gender: if men are logical, women are illogical, men rely on reason whereas women rely on emotions, men are strong and women are weak, and so on. Hence, the societal roles of female and male individuals are usually constructed based on a dichotomy that draws women closer to peace and men closer to war, and that continues to be supported as women are expected to behave in a peaceful and nurturing way, whereas men are expected to be courageous warriors (York, 1996:323).

Once women's experiences of conflict were given more attention, it was possible to notice that they can play a variety of roles: they can be community leaders, social organizers, traders, or fighters (Pankhurst, 2004:13). Evidence shows that, when given the choice, women would take up arms and resort to violence due to revolutionary or patriotic objectives, or for other personal reasons (Carroll, 1987:10). However, for many years, women have been denied the right to bear arms in police or military forces (Carroll, 1987:10). Establishing a direct relation between women and peace can be limiting, meaning that if it is agreed that women's special contributions are based on their "womanly instincts" they will continue to have their agency restricted to "feminine" roles (Charlesworth, 2008:350).

Feminists have been challenging the assumption that gender roles are genetically determined by one's biological sex. Moreover, feminist writers challenge knowledge-



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building that is based on qualities – which are usually assumed "masculine" – such as objectivity and control, and binary dualisms, instead of offering insights on complex social relationships (Goldstein, 2003:52). For instance, within the security subfield of International Relations, the most influential theory, namely Realism, values certain behaviours that are typically associated with men, such as rationality, power and autonomy. These attributes, based on a socially constructed ideal of masculinity, are those considered desirable for state behaviour when pursuing survival in the international system (Tickner, 2004:44). Hence, women tend to be excluded from analyses, as their ideas are presumed to be less important.

Goldstein (2003) concludes that the way boys are socialized motivates men's participation in war and, on the other hand, socialization practices of girls causes women's exclusion from it. What feminist theory tries to show is that these practices can be changed (Tickner, 2004:47). Hence, if the connection between women and peace truly exists, it is not a fixed condition (Carroll, 1987:15). Galtung (1996:41) states that there are cultures with male tradition high on aggressiveness and female tradition high on compassion, or structures which give men more opportunities to be violent, and all of it is a matter of "differential socialization", which may be deeply rooted but still changeable.

Therefore, hypotheses that suggest that women oppose war and do not participate in combat because of their peaceful nature are not able to explain gendered war roles, such as mothers and partners who encourage their sons and men to go to war and would give them physical and emotional support once they return home (Goldstein, 2003:322); or women who participated in peace movements but were ready to abandon their pacifist beliefs and back their governments' decision to pursue conflict, as exemplified by Carroll (1987:7-9) when discussing the ways in which women from European countries expressed their support to their governments during World War I. Women may also be helping perpetuate the stereotype when it comes to issues of conflict by holding onto their "civilian mind", which was developed due to their exemption from experiencing war the same way as men do (Tickner, 2004:44). That is, because women were denied participation in such matters for too long, they tend to believe that these issues are not of their concern and that they should not get involved.



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As examples of how women were separated from issues of the public sphere Afshar (2003:183) cites cases of women in Italy, Germany and Iran who were banned in the past from studying certain technical subjects and advised not to worry about other "unnecessary" subjects, and women who were forbidden to exercise their profession.

Nevertheless, analyses that assume that there is a division between the war and home fronts, or that women are always victims are too simplistic and can be misleading. Firstly, in war zones, the line that divides the home and battle fronts is increasingly getting blurred: conflict is taken to markets and streets, refugee shelters become targets for bombing, and villages are attacked by combatants (Afshar, 2003:181-182). Secondly, although women may be less likely to initiate wars, ascribing them the role of victim in every conflict situation dismisses the reality that they go through distinct war experiences, and that they rarely have a choice of whether to be a victim or have a more active role in conflict (Afshar, 2004:3). Moreover, just like women who assume positions in the military due to lack of male labour (Skjelsbæk, 2007:15), they can more easily assume positions of authority when men leave for war, positions that they have to abandon as soon as men return from the battlefield (Afshar, 2004:3). That happens because, although gender barriers may be less rigid in times of conflict, gender identities are not, and "the emphasis on motherhood and domesticity remains central to the survival of the entire community" (Afshar, 2004:4). Hence, whatever positions women may have achieved when men were away, do not necessarily translate to power to women (Afshar, 2004:4).

### 3.3.2 Women Peacekeepers

Scholars argue that peace operations are still at large military operations, and often times peacekeepers are those responsible for acts of violence against civilians in the host countries; therefore, having a more gender-balanced force would prevent these crimes from happening (Bridges & Horsfall, 2009; Bleckner, 2013). Female peacekeepers can help bridge the relationship between the host community and UN personnel by engendering trust and causing the reputation of peacekeepers to be improved, therefore changing the way in which these operations are perceived (Mazurana, 2003:64; Bridges & Horsfall, 2009:1). Most of the advantages that are said



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to be brought by women to UN missions are related to the relationship between peacekeepers and the local population, especially in the sense that women are better prepared to protect civilians because they are more sensitive; they can make assaulted women feel more comfortable; they can search local women or have access to places men cannot, hence improving intelligence gathering; and they can serve as role models for women from the host country (Jennings, 2011:3-4). Such ideas are at the centre of the "operational effectiveness" argument, which focus on women's positive impact through things they can do (and men cannot) to increase the levels of success of peace operations (Jennings, 2011:4).

Women have been taking part in UN peace operations since the first years of the implementation of the peacekeeping mechanism. But until 1993, when the increased number of missions consequently increased the demand for peacekeepers, the UN had not specifically requested female peacekeepers (Mazurana, 2003:64). In fact, historically, one of the reasons why women may end up occupying positions within military organizations is the lack of male labour (Skjelsbæk, 2007:15). One example offered by DeGroot (2001:27) is that of the Soviet forces after the German invasion in 1941 – the necessity to increase fighting capacity caused women to be recruited to all the branches of the military. Yet, another reason behind the increase in the number of female peacekeepers at the beginning of the 1990s was the new civilian components added to post-Cold War missions, and the broadened range of skills required for the missions (Beilstein, 1998:140).

In 1993, out of the nineteen active UN missions, eleven had significant civilian participation and 33 percent of the staff were women. Later, in 1995, the UN mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA), which was an election-monitoring and human rights mission had the highest percentage of women (48.7 percent) among the active missions. In Haiti, the human rights monitoring operation International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) had 39.2 percent women, whereas United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH), a military-observer mission, had 12.9 percent of female staff (Beilstein, 1998:140). These numbers demonstrate that tasks in multidimensional peace operations seem to be distributed by gender: although the number of women among



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the civilian staff is high, they account for only a small percentage of the military and police contingents (Olsson, 2000:2).

This happens due to the long tradition of the military being a gendered organization, mostly composed of men. For an organization to be considered gendered, it should be (i) envisioned and organised in terms of the differences between masculinity and femininity; (ii) male or female dominated; (iii) "symbolically and ideologically conceived in terms of a discourse that draws on hegemonically defined masculinities and femininities" (Carreiras, 2010:472). The military fits such pattern of gendered organizations firstly because within its structure, tasks are distributed differently between women and men, as well as opportunities to ascend to positions of power; secondly because male participants outnumber the female participants in all areas, but especially in those related to the institution's core functions; and thirdly because traditional definitions of the institution are based on hegemonic conceptions of masculinity (Carreiras, 2010:472).

Nevertheless, military professionals continue to be considered the best suited to take up the role of peacekeepers because peace operations can be a dangerous endeavour and hence, combat training is an important skill. However peacekeepers must also be capable of behaving in a less aggressive and more conciliatory way, and according to DeGroot (2001:33), "few conventionally trained male military personnel combine the qualities of soldier and social worker essential to the job." This is where the contradiction emerges: traditionally, military training highlights stereotypical male characteristics by encouraging recruits to abandon "feminine" characteristics such as compassion and sensitivity and develop strength and aggression instead (DeGroot, 2001:33-34). However, when deployed in a peace mission, soldiers are supposed to keep their aggression under control and seek for conciliation, and some argue that it is the restricted use of force that eventually lead peacekeepers to engage in acts of violence against the host population (DeGroot, 2001:33-34). Women can also be trained to be aggressive and resort to violence. Yet, DeGroot (2001:34) argues that they seem more capable of controlling their aggressiveness, and this type of controlled behaviour can have applications in modern military context, no matter where the explanation for it lies – be it in biological determinism or social conditioning.



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Receiving the same training (in cases where they are allowed to perform the same tasks) does not mean women and men will act the same way. Skjelsbæk (2007:14) contends that the self-image of a soldier is crucially affected by the way gender roles and consequent expectations are shaped both inside and outside the military. Hence, once men and women are expected to behave in a certain way because of the gender roles assigned to them, they may try to match those expectations regardless of their training. This might explain female soldiers who opt for playing supporting roles, or female peacekeepers who think of themselves as innate peacemakers. Hence, social expectations continue to affect male and female soldiers' performance in the field.

### 3.4 Resolution 1325

Within the context of the "new wars" – conflicts fought by both state and non-state forces, usually for ethnic, cultural or religious reasons, and with a substantial number of civilian casualties and displaced people – that surfaced in the post-Cold War, also emerged a pattern of activism on the part of civil society within the UN human rights bodies that culminated in normative developments centred on humanitarian goals (Chinkin, 2019:26-29). The circumstances ignited various initiatives within the UN in general, and the Security Council in particular, aimed at expanding the agenda for the protection of civilians. First came the deployment of military operations for humanitarian purposes, followed by the adoption of thematic resolutions which addressed groups of people who are most vulnerable in conflict (Chinkin, 2019:29-30). Slowly, the issue of women's and girls' special needs in times of war started to be discussed in these generic resolutions, however, they only focused on women as victims in need of protection (Chinkin, 2019:31).

Resolution 1325 is considered a milestone in the activism for gender equality as it was the first resolution to mention the importance of including women at all levels of peace processes. Like other resolutions which were passed in the 1990s and 2000s, UNSCR 1325 is the result of the efforts of the activism of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), later taken by women's advocates working within the UN (Cohn, 2008:185; Chinkin, 2019). The conceptual foundation of the resolution is found in the Beijing Platform for Action, more specifically in the chapter dedicated to women and armed



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conflict (Cohn, 2008:185). The document is the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995. Even though the language adopted throughout the text still emphasizes women as vulnerable and in need of protection, its chapter IV-E acknowledges that "peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men and development", and asks for "equal access and full participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for the prevention and resolution of conflicts", and for the promotion of a gender mainstreaming policy and programs when addressing conflicts (United Nations, 1995:52-54). Cohn (2008:187) states that it was in face of the difficulties to implement this chapter that NGOs started to think of taking the issue to the Security Council. Felicity Hill and Maha Muna, who were involved in the campaign for the approval of a SC resolution, explain that the main strategy of the NGOs was to "shift the focus from women as victims (without losing this aspect of conflict) to women as effective actors in peace and peacebuilding." (Cohn, Kinsella & Gibbings, 2004:132). They also highlight the importance of thinking about short-term actions that are part of a larger, long-term strategy that can cause a change in paradigm when thinking about peace and security (Cohn, Kinsella & Gibbings, 2004:132).

Throughout the UN's history, the number of women occupying important positions or working as governmental delegates has been small, so the role played by NGOs and women's organizations has been essential to "injecting the views of women into the organization" (Bunch, 2007:496). Some scholars, however, worry about the way in which resolution 1325 addresses the theme of women, peace and security. The language and arguments adopted to advocate for the passing and implementation of the resolution might legitimize traditional images of women: the victim and the peacemaker (Cohn, Kinsella & Gibbings, 2004:136). Jennings (2011:4-5) calls attention to the fact that the use of arguments focused solely on "female" characteristics that cause a positive impact on the operational effectiveness of UN missions, fails to have gender equality as a goal – i.e. by focusing on the positive *difference* women can make, they fail to stress that women simply have the right to be a part of peace processes, just like men.



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For Helen Kinsella (2004:137), UNSCR 1325 still emphasizes women in a certain way – i.e. as either victims or compassionate, empathetic beings – to facilitate their being accepted in security debates. In turn, Sheri Gibbings (2004:138) argues the resolution can even be used as a tool for some powerful countries to achieve their national interest, by legitimizing foreign military intervention in the name of women's liberation. In addressing these concerns, Cohn (2008:196-197) suggests a possible reason why the language adopted in the advocacy for the women, peace and security agenda in general, and in UNSCR 1325 in particular, may be contradictory in some aspects: most of the NGOs involved in the group that worked along with the Security Council in the formulation of 1325 did not define themselves as feminist or anti-war organizations. Hence, they did not want to be involved in discussions considered "too political", such as the use of rape as a weapon of war, militarism and its relation to masculinities, structural inequalities or gender constructs involved in the practice of war-making. Leaving such issues out of the discussion renders the possibilities for policy-making narrow, and results in activism that does not really challenge the current power structures and gender constructs (Cohn, 2008:197-198).

Saying women will be better peacekeepers because they are raised to be caretakers promotes "feminine" characteristics as more desirable than those considered "masculine" (York, 1996:324-325). Arguments based on differences between male and female "essence" reinforce the idea of women as moral agents who resort to dialogue instead of the use of force in their relations (Brown, 2003:1) and help perpetuate the very patriarchal structures they are supposed to fight (York, 1996:325). These claims are at the core of the operational-effectiveness argument, which constructs women as empathetic and compassionate beings, disciplinarian to the extent of their presence being enough to tame the behaviour of their male colleagues, and less threatening in spite of their military training (Jennings, 2011:7). Therefore, the ideal woman peacekeeper has the same traits usually associated with motherhood (Jennings, 2011:7). In addition, these arguments may place a heavy burden of responsibility on women peacekeepers' shoulders, since many times they end up being the only designated agents of change (Jennings, 2011:8).



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Nevertheless, in spite of being based on “affirmative gender essentialisms” – i.e. applying stereotypical images of women in a positive manner to show how resourceful they are, constructing women as compassionate beings, and even placing great responsibility on women as it portrays them as the only actors capable of behaving properly towards the achievement of peace – the operational-effectiveness argument is still considered to make a more convincing case for the inclusion of women in peace processes (Jennings, 2011:5-7). Moreover, resolution 1325 is important as it represents an effort to offer an approach to women’s role in conflict resolution that is different from the mere representation of women as victims (Skjelsbæk, 2007:24). Also, albeit slow, the number of women working in peace operations after the adoption of UNSCR 1325 has been growing.

In the UN missions deployed from 1957 to 1979, there were only five women among 6,250 soldiers; the number increased to 20 women serving among 26,250 troops in missions deployed in the next ten years (Ghimire, 2017:208). In 1993, while women composed 33 percent of the civilian staff, there is no register of how many women worked in the police or military components; and by the end of 2000, women represented 25 percent of professional staff, 51 percent of the general service staff, but only three and four percent of the military and police staff, respectively (Mazurana, 2003:64). As of January 2020, women were 5.35 percent of the military personnel among 23 missions – although not all of them are necessarily considered “peacekeeping” in spite of the presence of troops, such as the UN Verification Mission in Colombia (UNVMC) or the UN Support Operation in Somalia (UNSOS) (United Nations Department of Peace Operations, 2020a). The UN’s current target, to be achieved by 2028, is to have 25 percent women working as military observers and staff officers, 15 percent women in military contingents, 30 percent women as individual police officers and 20 percent women in formed police units (United Nations Department of Peace Operations, 2020a).

It is important to notice, however, that when there is a goal to increase representation of a particular group within an environment, higher numbers may be considered evidence of success without necessarily meaning any changes in culture or structure. Hence, achieving gender balance in peace operations does not mean the achievement



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of gender equality. As argued by Simic (2013:2): "gender equality implies that women and men have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities." In this sense, it is important to question the positions that these women occupy and the tasks they perform within peace operations (Skjelsbæk, 2007:31). Beilstein (1998:140) presents data on past UN missions that confirms the claim that missions with larger humanitarian and civilian components tend to be those with larger numbers of female personnel. Missions where women were assigned leadership positions also had a substantial number of women among professional staff, as was the case of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia (Beilstein, 1998:141-142).

Jennings (2011:5-6) calls attention to the fact that many women are deployed as medical staff, for example, or undertake other tasks that do not necessarily put them in contact with the host population. In this case, the arguments that women peacekeepers positively impact the relationship between the mission's personnel and the host population and that they serve as role model to local women and girls loses strength in face of the reality that there is little interaction among these female peacekeepers and the local people. In turn, by analysing the deployment of female military personnel between 2006 and 2011, Karim and Beardsley (2013) found evidence showing that women are more prevalent in missions deployed in contexts that offer less danger to peacekeepers. There was also no evidence confirming that women are being deployed in places where the levels of gender insecurity and inequality are high, or that the acknowledgement of gender issues in the missions' mandates has any effect on the number of female military personnel deployed (Karim & Beardsley, 2013:478-482).

One could conclude that women, as a minority in military contingents of UN operations, have mostly been ascribed the role of what Kanter (1977) calls "tokens": symbolic representatives of their social category in an unbalanced group (Bleckner, 2013:354). They are identified by characteristics that are linked to a set of assumptions about their status and behaviour, and because they are "rare" in a larger group, they are supposed to represent their category and address every issue related to it whether they choose to do it or not (Kanter, 1977:968). Nonetheless, if a minority group is to have real possibility of influencing the majority, i.e. if women are to exercise their positive



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influence in the military system of peace operations, there needs to be a "critical mass" of 30 percent women within the system (Skjelsbæk, 2007:31). Hence, increasing the number of female peacekeepers and achieving gender parity could be considered a first step towards the larger objective of achieving gender equality. Additionally, even though an increase in the number of female peacekeepers may not say much about the qualitative impact of their presence, it creates better opportunities to assess such impact and gather more evidence of their effectiveness (Jennings, 2011:7-8). Greater female representation may not guarantee that the masculine culture of institutions will be challenged or that future conflicts will be prevented, but such culture is unlikely to change without increased female participation (Pankhurst, 2004:30).

### 3.5 The Goal of Achieving Uniformed Gender Parity

UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions recommended that women were offered equal opportunities to take part in peace processes in all areas of UN's peace operations, including among the uniformed component of missions. As of January 2020, overall female representation within field missions stood at approximately six percent, combining both the police and military components (United Nations Department of Peace Operations, 2020a). The current target for female participation among the uniformed component of missions was set in the "Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018 – 2028" (United Nations Department of Peace Operations, 2018b). In the coming years, the UN expects a one percent growth in female representation across all categories of uniformed personnel in order to reach 25 percent women serving as staff officers and military observers, and 15 percent women among the UN troops. Among the police component the target is to reach 30 percent of female representation among individual police officers (IPOs), and 20 percent among formed police units (FPU).

However, the increase in female representation among UN uniformed personnel has not been linear (figures 3.1 and 3.2). Additionally, the average growth in female representation across categories of uniformed personnel is not the same. For instance, having more women deployed is especially difficult among troops, the category that represents most of the personnel in UN missions, and the one that has shown an average growth of only 0.2 percent a year. If in the next years the increase in female



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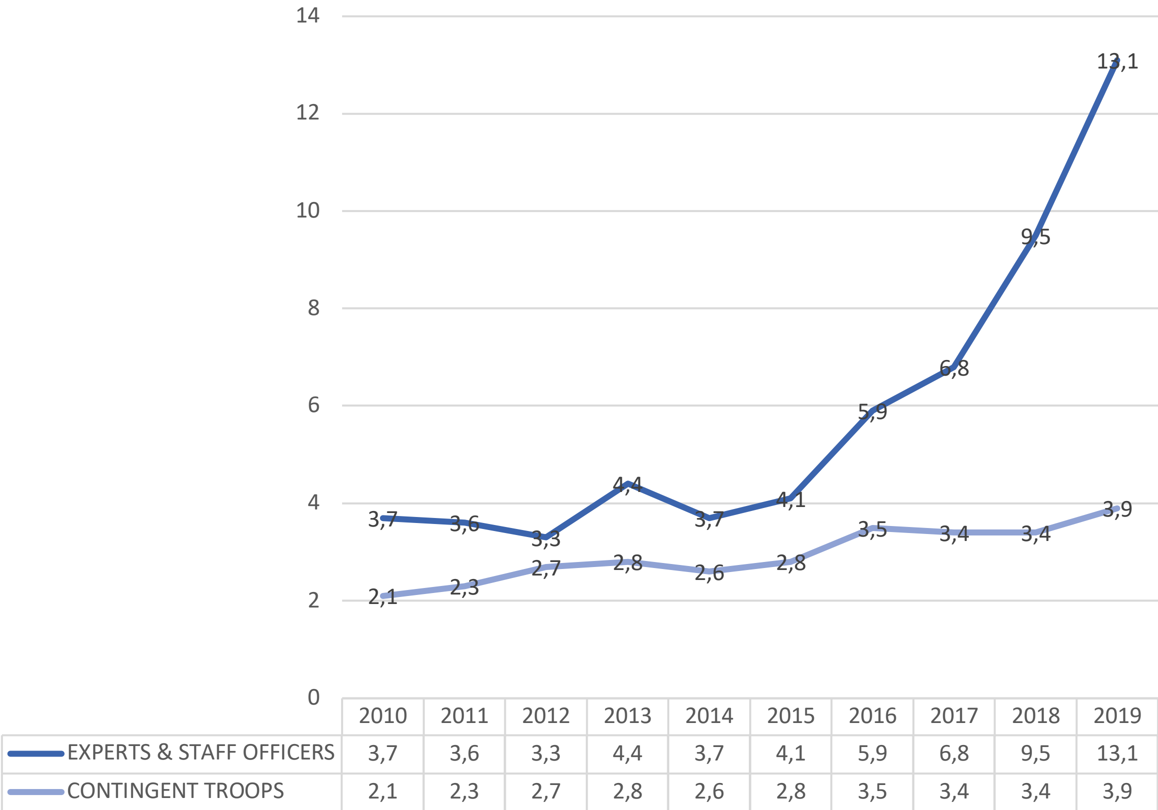
representation within UN troops follows the average growth of the past years, by 2028 women will represent only 5.7 percent of personnel – way far from the expected 15 percent. On the other hand, the sharpest average growth could be noticed among individual police officers (1.5 percent a year). Therefore, the target for women's representation among IPOs could achieve the expected 30 percent female representation even before 2028.

Figure 3.1: Average Percentage of Women within the Military Component of UN Peace Operations (2010 - 2019)




| | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EXPERTS & STAFF OFFICERS | 3,7 | 3,6 | 3,3 | 4,4 | 3,7 | 4,1 | 5,9 | 6,8 | 9,5 | 13,1 |
| CONTINGENT TROOPS | 2,1 | 2,3 | 2,7 | 2,8 | 2,6 | 2,8 | 3,5 | 3,4 | 3,4 | 3,9 |

*Source: based on data available on peacekeeping.un.org/en/gender*



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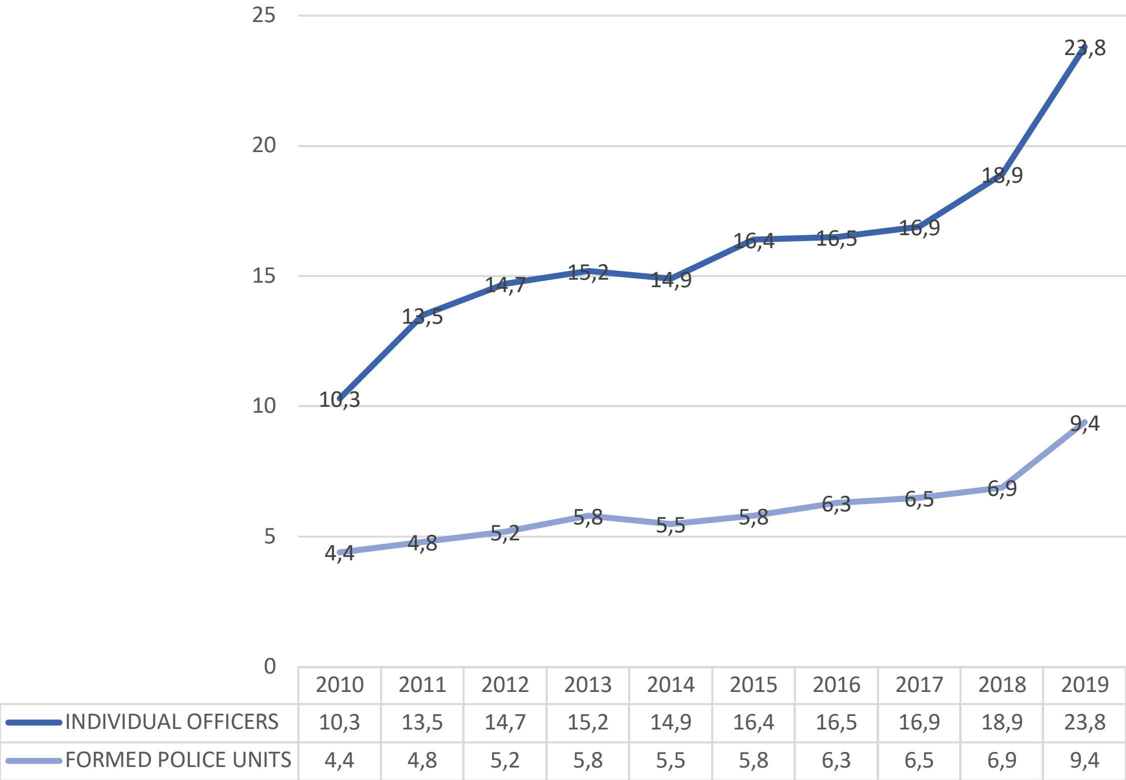
Figure 3.2: Average Percentage of Women within the Police Component of UN Peace Operations (2010 - 2019)




| | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| INDIVIDUAL OFFICERS | 10,3 | 13,5 | 14,7 | 15,2 | 14,9 | 16,4 | 16,5 | 16,9 | 18,9 | 23,8 |
| FORMED POLICE UNITS | 4,4 | 4,8 | 5,2 | 5,8 | 5,5 | 5,8 | 6,3 | 6,5 | 6,9 | 9,4 |

*Source: based on data available on peacekeeping.un.org/en/gender*

To reach these targets and have a more gender-balanced uniformed component, the DPO has set strategies in four key areas (United Nations Department of Peace Operations, 2018b:7-11). The first is to create an enabling environment, with actions such as preventing abuse and harassment within the uniformed contingents and improving in-mission accommodations. The second key area is recruitment and training, which includes bold strategies such as requesting from troop contributing countries (TCCs) an engagement team (ET) composed of at least 50 percent women in each infantry battalion. As of 2021, this measure will be compulsory and TCCs will not be able to deploy their contingents without an ET. For the police component, one of the plans is to implement the non-acceptance of all-male candidate teams. The third area involves strategies of communication and outreach such as increasing awareness



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of women within security institutions about the opportunities available in UN peace operations, and also encouraging TCCs to implement gender focal points in their own national forces. The final area of action is leadership and accountability, with the implementation of gender-related goals that must be achieved by senior management both in the UN headquarters and in field operations. Additionally, troop and police contributing countries that do not meet the UN gender targets will possibly lose their chance to deploy their nationals. Other initiatives include: (i) requesting that contributing countries deploy at least 20 percent women to serve as individual police officers, and 30 percent for positions among justice and correctional personnel; (ii) prioritizing the deployment of formed police units that include women; (iii) establishing mixed engagement teams composed of 50 percent women within the police component; (iv) prioritizing qualified women to be appointed as military staff officers (United Nations Department of Peace Operations, 2019b).

Nevertheless, the study conducted by Smit and Tidblad-Lundholm (2018) has shown that even among the civilian component of peace operations, where the number of women is higher and for which the UN does not rely on member states' contributions, female representation is still far from parity. In fact, for the period of time analysed by the authors (2007-2018), the overall proportion of women working as international civilian staff in UN missions decreased – even though a 3.3 percent increase in female representation among the civilian component of special political missions was noticed (Smit & Tidblad-Lundholm, 2018:8-12). This latter fact could be perceived as a confirmation of the argument that women are usually deployed to missions that involve less risk because of the idea that women (even those with military or police training) need to be always protected (Karim, 2017b; Tidblad-Lundholm, 2020). As of June 2020, the overall percentage of women among the UN civilian staff was 40 percent. Regarding the civilian staff deployed in the field, female representation stood at 30 percent (United Nations, 2020b). These recent numbers confirm the stagnation of female representation among the civilian component of the missions that was pointed out by Smit and Tidblad-Lundholm (2018).



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### 3.6 Conclusion

As peace operations acquired a multifunctional character and began to include tasks that go beyond military matters, the central position soldiers have occupied as primary peacekeepers started to be questioned. Some argue that people who are trained to use violence against an enemy can find it difficult to act in an environment where the enemy is not clearly specified, and the use of violence is restricted. Because new peacekeeping tasks such as the delivery of humanitarian aid, disarmament of combatants and support to victims of violence entail greater interaction between peacekeepers and the civilian population of the host country, which is usually made up of mostly women and children, advocacy for the inclusion of women in peace processes – including as peacekeepers – gained momentum. The arguments in favour of an increased female representation in peace operations, however, rely mostly on essentialist and stereotypical assumptions that portray women as inherently peaceful and caring.

Because of this "feminine nature", women peacekeepers are said to be able to better protect civilians, empathize more with victims, improve the relationship between the host population and the peacekeepers, and balance the violent behaviour of their male counterparts. Based on these arguments, the UN has been working to achieve more gender-balanced forces through the deployment of more female peacekeepers in the field, an endeavour that has received extra attention since the adoption of UNSCR 1325. However, the same arguments that support the deployment of women can reinforce stereotypes that end up limiting women's actions to "feminine" roles that not always allow them to interact with the population, rendering some of these very arguments void statements that cannot be supported by evidence. That is, if women are occupying positions that restrict their interaction with the host community, it is difficult to assess if they really are perceived as more approachable or as better peacekeepers by the population. Additionally, there is reinforcement of the idea of women as moral agents and the only agents of change in conflict situations, which in turn can be a heavy burden for women to carry. For instance, there is a belief that the mere presence of women will somehow hinder male peacekeepers from acting violently towards civilians. Although female peacekeepers might serve as moral



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deterrent to some extent, assuming that their deployment is the only necessary condition to restrain the violent behaviour of male peacekeepers simplifies their role in the field and, moreover, sustains the idea that men cannot control their own "naturally" violent instincts without some sort of female oversight.

In spite of the arguments that women improve the operational effectiveness of missions, they continue to represent the minority of personnel among uniformed components of UN peace operations, especially because they are the minority group within national security institutions from where the UN gets its peacekeepers. In order to address this issue, the DPO has adopted a gender parity strategy that aims at steadily increasing the number of female officers deployed across all categories of uniformed personnel. The goal set by the department, however, fails to acknowledge that growth in the number of female peacekeepers is not linear, varying greatly from one category to another – while it is feasible for some, it is not the case for others.

Data has shown that missions with larger humanitarian and civilian components are those who tend to have greater female representation among UN personnel. The connection between women and humanitarian action should lead to the assumption that missions with an underlying humanitarian approach should include more women in their composition. However, that may not be the case. The next chapters of this study are dedicated to exploring the conditions for the establishment of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), a multidimensional operation that had humanitarianism as one of its pillars and, yet, had little female representation among its uniformed component. Also, if one counts the joint mission with the Organization of American States (OAS) in the beginning of the 1990s, MINUSTAH was the eighth UN operation deployed in Haiti. When the operation was established, the Haitian people had already been dealing with international presence in the country for over ten years. It is important to take this fact into consideration when discussing how the local population felt towards MINUSTAH. Because of that, the historical path that led to the deployment of MINUSTAH is of relevance for this study, and shall be also addressed in the next chapter.



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# 4 THE UNITED NATIONS PRESENCE IN HAITI

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter offers a historical approach to the conditions of the Haitian state and the establishment of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). In order to do so, the chapter starts off by exploring the colonial past and the various international interventions that took place in Haiti over the years, as a way to start the discussion of how they could have contributed to the country being considered a failed state. Overall, the situation in Haiti does not fit the traditional definition of a security threat in the sense of a threat to national sovereignty or territorial integrity (Buzan & Hansen, 2009; Newman, 2011). However, it came to be understood as such according to the interests of the Security Council (and its major powers) – since the Charter entrusts the SC with the task of defining threats to international security that will prompt UN action (United Nations, 1945; Galvan, 2011). This is an important context to the UN's involvement in Haiti since the 1990s through the various missions deployed in the country during that decade. This historical background can also offer important insights that eventually help us gain better understanding of how the Haitian people perceived the UN presence in the country, since Haitians' perceptions of MINUSTAH cannot be detached from the fact the local community was already dealing with the UN presence in the country for years before MINUSTAH's establishment. This understanding becomes valuable to this study in face of the argument that increased female representation among UN personnel can help a peace operation gain local legitimacy. Additionally, it is argued this legitimacy cannot be detached from the success or failure of the mission (Fetherston, 1994:40-42; Korson, 2015; Gippert, 2016).

## 4.2 The Haitian State

Haiti has been facing problems regarding the economy, security, infrastructure and political instability since its independence, and even after a number of international interventions, which were said to be aimed at helping the country achieve stability, Haiti still ranks number 12 in the Fragile States Index (Fund for Peace, 2019). Once the richest French colony in the Americas, Haiti turned into one of the poorest countries



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in the world, to the point of being considered a failed state. As per a Weberian approach to state theory, a failed state would be one that "cannot perform the basic functions of statehood throughout its territory" (Gros, 2012:25). These basic functions are related to the state's capacity to provide the people with security, good economic management, social welfare and legitimate political institutions (Patrick, 2006:29). As will be discussed later, since the shift in definitions of security that occurred mostly in the post-Cold War, states labelled failed end up being more prone to become targets for foreign intervention.

Nevertheless, saying Haiti is a failed state without acknowledging the historical events that led the country down this path does not help understand why it has been so difficult for Haiti to get on its feet. Trouillot (1990:15) argues that the historical evolution of the country is marked by "an increasing disjuncture between political and civil society" that contributes to the prolonged emergence of weak governments. In turn, Gros (2012:53) believes that the continuous hardships faced by the country are a confirmation of the "path dependence" nature of institutions, i.e. "past events or decisions influence the design and quality of current and future decisions", which would allow the "failed state" situation to remain unchanged.

Many territorial and social divisions existed in colonial Haiti – local groups had their divergences about what should be done to achieve the common purpose of equality, which ultimately caused the Haitian state to be born as a fragmented nation (Trouillot, 1990:42). Independent Haiti emerged in 1804 under very problematic conditions, as the sugar and coffee plantations were ruined as a result of the struggle between slaves and slave owners (Castor & Garafola, 1974:256). However, internal factors are not the sole cause of state failure. As argued by Gros (2012:32), external factors such as war, embargoes, international law, (neo)colonialism and neoliberalism can also contribute to this process. The author observes, for instance, that the 38 most fragile states in 2009 were all European colonies in the past, and most of them had at some point adopted structural adjustment programs based on neoliberal policies (Gros, 2012:34).

Therefore, foreign governments that managed to gain control over Haiti's politics and economy also contributed to the country's instability. Firstly, it is important to notice



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that Haiti has become an independent state after a slave revolt. As a country founded by slaves in a world that was still dominated by slavery, Haiti was perceived by powerful nations as a threat and, thus, was politically isolated (Dubois, 2012:5). Its independence was only recognized by France, formal administrator of that territory, upon the payment of an indemnity, which forced Haitian leaders to take loans from French banks and enter a cycle of debt that only got worse over time – by 1914, eighty percent of the country's budget were destined to the payment of these loans (Dubois, 2012:8). Additionally, the isolation engendered concerns about a possible invasion and led Haitian leaders to invest in the construction of fortifications and in the creation of an army, which not only was extremely costly but also emphasized military capability at the expense of civilian concerns (Dubois, 2012:5). Later, from 1915 to 1934, Haiti would be under United States occupation, justified as an intervention to help Haiti maintain order and restore its finances, and as preventive action to stop alleged attempts by European powers to occupy the country (Douglas, 1927:252). However, it is argued that the occupation worsened the situation in two ways: (i) by deepening the country's dependency on a production system based on monocrops (mostly coffee) and by increasing the peasantry's contributions to the state, which were collected through US-managed customs houses; (ii) by disarming the provinces and centralizing the state apparatus (especially the armed forces) – a strategy focused on pacifying opposition groups that ended up worsening the Haitian political scene (Trouillot, 1990; Steckley, 2015; Hauge, 2018).

Although the American occupation brought some modernization benefits to Haiti, it made no substantial difference in the country's situation, so state power remained vulnerable and the divisions in Haiti's society continued to exist – in fact, they were exacerbated (Gros, 2012:95-96). Gros further affirms that the occupation resulted in Haiti becoming a weak, excessively dependent state, that constantly seeks foreign aid. The American occupation also made way for François Duvalier's ascension to power by centralizing economic, military and political power in the capital without altering the underlying structures of the country, and by favouring the mulatto bourgeoisie (Dupuy, 1988:107). Duvalier implemented a dictatorship that lasted for 30 years. The long duration of the regime was possible thanks to the local support Duvalier gained through



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the use of a nationalist and noirist[1] rhetoric and also the concession of goods to the Haitian elite and the army (Gros, 2012:100-102). Moreover, despite his dictatorial rule, Duvalier received extensive help from the United States government (Arthus, 2015:505-506). It was with the money and weapons provided by the U.S. that François Duvalier was able to, for example, strengthen the *Tonton Macoutes*, his paramilitary personal security guard (Gros, 2012:104-105). Pezzullo (2006:108) reports that the support received from the United States increased consistently when François's son, Jean-Claude, took office in 1971 and led a friendlier (yet still repressive) government. During the looser rule of Jean-Claude, the opposition regained strength. Among the voices calling Haitians to action was Jean Bertrand Aristide, who would later become the elected president.

### 4.3 The "failed" state as a rationale for international intervention

According to Patrick (2006:29), the strength of a state can be measure by its ability and willingness to fulfil the task of providing the people with fundamental political goods such as security, good economic management, social welfare and legitimate political institutions. Dealing with serious gaps in one or more of these areas of governance usually means that a country may have legal but not real sovereignty (Patrick, 2006:29). As Newman (2009:423) points out, the debate regarding failed states is "a result of the apparent discrepancy between the *de jure* system and the *de facto* nature of many states." The author further argues that ideals of self-determination, sovereignty and egalitarianism among polities allowed weak states to continue to exist in spite of their internal disorder and illegitimacy (Newman, 2009:423). With the post-Cold War shift in the meaning of security, weak states have increasingly been considered potential threats to international stability.

Traditional state-centred approaches prioritized the state as the object of security. Conversely, the end of the Cold War highlighted the idea of security as a broader concept, i.e. the concept was expanded to embrace issues other than external military threats. According to Rothschild (1995:55) this expansion happened in four ways: (i)

[1] *Noirisme* is understood as a radical ideology which "advocated total control of the state apparatus by black representatives of the popular classes." (Smith, 2004, p. 26)



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from security of states to security of individuals; (ii) from security of states to that of the international system; (iii) from military security to political, environmental, economic and social security; (iv) lastly, the responsibility for guaranteeing security was diffused among states, regional and international organizations, and even non-governmental organizations. Arguably, one of the most important concepts that emerged from this shift was that of human security, which is linked to individuals becoming the object of security and thus, daily worries such as having a job, having access to health, education, food, and being protected from violence turn into central issues (United Nations Development Programme, 1994). The consequence of these changes is that factors such as underdevelopment turned into securitized issues, and states' domestic crises began to integrate the list of events that could possibly pose a threat to international security.

Because "failed" states cannot effectively fulfil their task of providing minimal civil conditions for the population (Solomon, 2015), not only their governments risk to lose legitimacy but also the nature of the nation-state may be perceived as illegitimate by the citizens (Rotberg, 2003:1). Poor governance in weak countries can cause their citizens to live in conditions of extreme poverty, chronic illness, lack of physical security in face of high crime rates, and lack of access to education and health care; furthermore, these states are also more prone to be the site of protracted civil wars (Patrick, 2006:31). This situation creates an environment conducive to events such as humanitarian catastrophes, mass migration, environmental degradation, and regional instability that could affect other countries (Patrick, 2006:27).

Weak states are commonly susceptible to economic intervention by neoliberal forces, and according to Newman (2009:424), this can further weaken state capacity in general, and the provision of public goods to citizens in particular, in states that are already considered fragile. In Haiti, for instance, the adoption of policies based on the conditions imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank has resulted in a rapid and strong devaluation of the Haitian Gourde and in the entry of highly subsided foreign imports, against which the local producers could not compete (Gros, 2012:148-151). Thus, different from what could have been expected by Haitian leaders, the country's economy was furthered weakened.



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Besides foreign economic intervention, weak states such as Haiti are also constantly facing the possibility of external military intervention, due to the fact that they are more susceptible to violence that may affect the stability of their vicinities (Patrick, 2006:45). Regarding this perception of the Haitian weak state as a threat, it is worth mentioning the intervention that followed the military coup that overthrew president Aristide in 1991. Under the rule of the military junta, Haiti was facing an internal crisis seen by great powers as the cause of a mass flow of refugees, especially to the U.S. The situation could also encourage reactionary sectors in larger national forces throughout the American continent to also rise against elected governments (Constable, 1992:176-177). Therefore, this perception of the domestic situation in Haiti as a potential threat – to the United States more specifically – can be understood as the rationale for the first UN interventions in the country.

Considering that the great powers were imbued with the task of shaping security threats and their possible belief in the concept of failed states as analytically viable, addressing the issue of states' capacity to perform their basic functions of statehood is important not only to respond to humanitarian crises but also to tackle the threat these states pose to the system. One of the ways in which state weakness could be tackled is through the temporary suspension of sovereignty in order to facilitate international involvement, and military intervention where governments are unable or unwilling to control the effects of state weakness (Newman, 2009:424-425). This is clear in the case of Haiti. In 1915, Haiti was occupied by U.S. marines under the justification that the North American presence would help reestablish order and secure the Caribbean nation's independence in the aftermath of president Guillaume Sam's assassination (Douglas, 1927:240). Moreover, since the 1990s, Haiti has also received another U.S. operation, followed by several UN operations.

### 4.4 The first UN missions in Haiti

In spite of the ongoing instability of the Haitian state since its independence and the number of human rights violations that were taking placing for years, the first formal involvement of the UN in the country only happened in 1990, when jointly with the Organization of American States (OAS), the organization monitored Haiti's presidential election at the request of the country's provisional government (Carey, 1998). Jean-



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Bertrand Aristide was thus elected president of Haiti in what was considered the country's first free elections, but before he was able to complete his first year as president, Aristide was overthrown by a military coup, in September 1991. Following the coup, Haiti had to face not only the challenge of an oppressive military regime that constantly violated human rights, but also deal with the consequences of an OAS embargo that worsened the country's economic situation but was seen as the only viable choice to bring the Haitian authorities to the negotiation table (Constable, 1992:175, 183). Economic sanctions, however, were undermined by the U.S. decision on exceptions to the embargo in order to favour American industries operating in Haiti (Malone, 1997:129).

Another option would be the establishment of a multinational mission, but as one would expect, such proposals were rejected by the coup leaders (Constable, 1992:180). However, in 1993, the military junta agreed to the deployment of the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) – a joint UN-OAS operation aimed at monitoring human rights violations in the country (United Nations Department of Peace Operations, 2020b). Nevertheless, what really resulted in a negotiation between the parties was an oil and arms embargo imposed by the Security Council that same year (United Nations Department of Peace Operations, 2020b).

The negotiations led to the signing of the Governors Island Agreement by Lieutenant-General Raoul Cédras, chief of the military junta that ruled Haiti, and President Aristide. Thus, the UN decided to suspend the embargo and establish its second operation in the country, the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH), mandated to help modernize the Haitian armed forces and create a national police force (United Nations Department of Peace Operations, 2020b). The situation in Haiti, however, continued to deteriorate, forcing many Haitians to flee the country. The increasing number of Haitian refugees strongly influenced the authorization of a US-led Multinational Force (MNF) to resort to "all necessary means" to reinstall Aristide in power (Malone, 1997:132). In 1995 UNMIH was fully reestablished and took over the responsibilities from the MNF. Its revised mandate entailed: (i) assisting in the modernization and professionalization of the Haitian armed force; (ii) creating a separate police force; (iii) helping sustain a safe



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and stable environment, conducive to the organization of elections; (iv) protecting international installations and personnel (United Nations, 2015).

In 1996 the mandate of UNMIH expired and the Security Council authorized the establishment of another mission, the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti (UNSMIH). Its mandate maintained the tasks of guaranteeing a secure and stable environment and added the tasks of (i) training and professionalizing the recently created Haitian National Police (HNP); and (ii) coordinating institution-building, economic recovery and national conciliation activities (United Nations, 2015). However, the security situation deteriorated even further, the country's economy stagnated, and the population was disappointed in the lack of improvement in their daily lives (Malone, 1997:141-142). UNSMIH was followed by three other missions: the United Nations Transition Mission in Haiti (UNTMIH), the United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH), and the International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti (MICAH) – the last one, unlike previous missions, was established by a General Assembly resolution and mandated to solidify the results achieved by previous operations (United Nations, 2015).

Table 4.1: UN Political and Peacekeeping Mission in Haiti from 1993 to 2001

| UNITED NATIONS MISSIONS IN HAITI | YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT |
|---|---|
| MICIVIH | 1993 |
| UNMIH | 1993<br>(reestablished under a revised mandate in 1995) |
| UNSMIH | 1996 |
| UNTMIH | 1997 |
| MIPONUH | 1997 |



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| MICAH | 2000 |
|---|---|

*Source: https://search.archives.un.org/united-nations-political-and-peacekeeping-missions-in-haiti-1993-2001*

Hamann (2009:40) claims that the constant deployment of so many limited-mandate operations has caused the UN to lose some legitimacy in the eyes of the Haitian public. For Mobekk (2000:30), the reaction of the Haitian people to the interventions went from a friendly reception to disillusionment mainly because there was a disconnection between what Haitians expected of the intervention and what the international community's intentions were. In this sense, Mobekk (2000:30,36) points to how important it was for the Haitian population that those who perpetrated crimes during the military regime were punished for their actions. However, instead of assisting in the administration of justice, the international community actively prevented the Haitian government from achieving it – for example, when the U.S. government denied access to and also altered important documents that could have been used in court to sentence those involved in human rights violations (Mobekk, 2000:32-34).

Malone (1997:133) points to yet another issue that affected the results of the first interventions: the fact that the missions did not conduct a disarmament campaign. This factor, along with the lack of justice, led to a situation of minimum public security and widespread fear, as many former members of paramilitary forces continued to walk freely and armed around Haitian territory (Mobekk, 2000:32). Additionally, many former members of the Haitian Armed Forces were integrated into the new Haitian National Police, causing a sense of distrust in and the lack of legitimacy of the newly created security institution (Lemay-Hébert, 2015:724). In turn, Hagman (2002:4) reports that there is consensus about how focusing on short-term initiatives overshadowed what should have been the main goal of the missions: provide the foundation for the development of more functional democratic institutions in the country.



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## 4.5 Conclusion

Pronouncements about state failure may imply that the crises that weaken the state stem only from domestic issues. However, external factors do contribute to state failure. An overview of the Haitian history shows that much of the international "help" the country received over the years ended up adding to the country's colonial legacy and many internal divisions, thus causing the deepened dependence and instability of the Haitian state. This instability, framed as a potential threat to international security, led to the establishment of different UN missions in Haiti. The main goals of these missions were to: monitor the human rights situation in the country, reinstall the president that had been ousted by a coup, professionalize Haiti's army (and later the National Police), and coordinate institution-building and economic recovery. Throughout this process, however, some issues remained unaddressed, especially the disarming and prosecution of former members of the armed forces who were involved in human rights violations during the military regime. In addition to that, many former soldiers were integrated into the new National Police. Consequently, the Haitian population continued to live in fear, and could not fully trust the newly created police force. The first UN missions could not offer conditions for stability to be achieved in Haiti. In the beginning of the 2000s, after the second election of Aristide, Haiti was found in another political crisis that ended up igniting the establishment of yet another UN mission in the country: MINUSTAH.

MINUSTAH was the first multidimensional mission deployed in Haiti, established in 2004 by the Security Council through resolution 1542. The more holistic approach intended by MINUSTAH was reflected in its mandate, which was based on three mains pillars: establishing a secure and stable environment, guaranteeing due political process, and protecting human rights (United Nations Security Council, 2004d). As it will be discussed in the next chapter, the context which MINUSTAH would have to address was not one of traditional civil war, and would involve what Cockayne (2009:77) defines as a "protection competition" in which the objective was to earn the trust of the population. This put the Haitian people at the centre of the operation, therefore, gaining local legitimacy was an important step towards mission success. In this sense, and taking into account the argument that women can better bridge the



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relationship between the local population and the peace forces, how MINUSTAH personnel was perceived by the local community gains even more importance to this study.



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# 5 THE UNITED NATIONS STABILIZATION MISSION IN HAITI

## 5.1 Introduction

As discussed in previous chapters, the operational effectiveness argument for the increase of female participation in UN peace missions depicts women as empathetic and compassionate beings, less threatening in spite of their military training, and able to tame the behaviour of their male counterparts (Jennings, 2011:7). Based on these assumptions, this chapter focuses on two aspects of MINUSTAH: the relationship between peacekeepers and the local population (and the consequent perception Haitians had of the mission), and the many allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) that marred the mission. As it is argued that the presence of women peacekeepers can have a positive impact in these areas, this chapter discusses how the issue of increasing the number of female uniformed personnel in MINUSTAH was approached by the United Nations, and how the work of female peacekeepers may have impacted the Haitian people, especially local women.

The chapter starts off by exploring the context for the adoption of Resolution 1529, which authorizes the deployment of MINUSTAH. Next, the relationship between the Haitian population and the peacekeepers will be addressed. That is followed by a discussion of the cases of sexual exploitation and abuse that took place during the mission, as well as a general overview of the situation of Haitian women over the years. Next, the chapter offers a brief analysis of the female representation within the mission's uniformed personnel (military and police officers), and whether they were given the opportunity of improving the operational effectiveness of the mission. To conclude, some MINUSTAH projects that tried to integrate a gender perspective and impact the lives of local women are addressed. Although there is little information about how these projects worked, it is important to mention the mission's effort to mainstream gender.

## 5.2 The establishment of MINUSTAH

Hagman (2002:3) reports that participants of a seminar about peacebuilding in Haiti, held by the International Peace Academy, agreed that in the beginning of the 2000s,



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Haiti was not facing a post-conflict situation, but was rather a pre-crisis state. Jean-Bertrand Aristide had been re-elected in 2000 and assumed his functions as president in February 2001. Dupuy (2006) argues that since his return to Haiti in 1994, Aristide had already divorced the ideas of egalitarianism he had once advocated. The author further claims that, for the new term, the president's objectives were to maintain the clientelist characteristic of Haitian governments and secure his power. Noticing that he had neither the support of the dominant classes nor of Haiti's international allies, Aristide followed a trend observed in previous Haitian regimes and tried to govern through force, turning to armed gangs (known as the *chimères*) to secure his mandate (Carey, 2005:334; Dupuy, 2006:134). The *chimères* would intimidate the media, violently end demonstrations against the government, or even murder members of the opposition, however, Aristide never attempted to fully exterminate his opposition (Dupuy, 2006:135-136). The atmosphere of instability led to the rise of various armed gangs besides the *chimères*, some of which joined forces in a one-month uprising that faced little resistance by the Haitian National Police (HNP) and culminated in the resignation of Aristide (Carey, 2005:331).

Following Aristide's resignation, the UN authorized a Multinational Interim Force (MIF) composed of American, French, Canadian and Chilean troops, to be deployed in the country (Dupuy, 2006:160). The MIF was mandated to, *inter alia*, help maintaining a secure and stable environment in Haiti, enable the distribution of humanitarian assistance and promote viable conditions for international and regional bodies to help the Haitian population. It was also authorized to use all means necessary to fulfil its mandate (United Nations Security Council, 2004c). The intervention, however, was contested especially in terms of state sovereignty, since it supported the removal of a rightfully elected head of state, even though he had lost much of his legitimacy both in the domestic and international arenas (Edozie, 2008:98; dos Santos Parra, 2019:489-490). Moreover, Haiti was not experiencing a post-conflict situation nor an ongoing civil war, but historical political instability and social unrest (Caparini & Osland, 2016:9).

Therefore, one of the justifications for the adoption of Resolution 1529, which authorized the MIF, was the international community's moral duty to provide human security to Haitians (Edozie, 2008:102) – an argument supported by some of the tasks



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assigned to the Interim Force, such as facilitating the provision of humanitarian aid and supporting international and regional organizations in their efforts to assist the Haitian people (United Nations Security Council, 2004c). Resolution 1529 also authorizes the follow-up deployment of a stabilization force (United Nations Security Council, 2004c). Hence, in a similar way to what had happened in 1994 when the U.S.-led Multinational Force deployed in Haiti was replaced by UNMIH, the MIF was later replaced by the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

UN Peacebuilding efforts in Haiti throughout the years encompassed goals such as the construction of a security sector centred in the new HNP, economic rehabilitation, the promotion of participatory democracy and human rights, and a justice sector reform (Hagman, 2002:3). These goals, however, instead of being part of a more robust operation, were distributed among short-lived missions deployed in the 1990s (Hamann, 2009:40). But based on the growing notion that international security issues have multi-layered causes and consequences, MINUSTAH – the first multidimensional UN operation in Haiti – was founded on three main pillars: (i) ensure a secure and stable environment; (ii) ensure due political process; (iii) promote human rights (Hamann, 2009:40). In order to carry out its mandate, the mission involved not only military and police personnel, but also a number of humanitarian actors (Gauthier & Bonin, 2008:1).

Lemay-Hébert (2015:722) calls attention to the fact that MINUSTAH's mandate, nevertheless, emphasised security, which is understandable given the fact that violence had become part of the citizens' daily life. It is argued that violence in Haiti is commonly seen as the result of either archetypes of power inherited from its colonial past, or the many challenges the country faced throughout its state-building process (Gauthier & Bonin, 2008:2). Nevertheless, during the initial phase of MINUSTAH, this violence was also understood as being a consequence of the extreme poverty that affects the Haitian population (Gauthier & Bonin, 2008:3). In spite of alternative approaches (some of which were later adopted through the Community Violence Reduction program carried out by the mission) that could better respond to the situation, MINUSTAH chose to address the country's problems mostly through the securitization of social issues (Lemay-Hébert, 2015:722, 726).



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According to Lemay-Hébert (2015:722), the mission could be divided into three phases: (i) from 2004 to 2006, the sole focus was on restoring stability and creating a favourable environment for the carrying-out of elections; (ii) from 2006 to 2010, the mission was focused on security sector reform and on dealing with the violence perpetrated by gangs in the slums of Port-au-Prince; (iii) the last phase began after Haiti was hit by an earthquake in the beginning of 2010, hence, emphasis was given to recovery and reconstruction programs, but security also continued to be a priority. It is noteworthy that the high levels of urban gang violence registered in Haiti was one of the factors that prompted Brazilian authorities to offer to lead the mission, since the domestic situation in the South American nation has some similarities with the Caribbean nation in this regard (Müller & Steinke, 2018:229). Accordingly, the tactics adopted followed a pattern based on the Brazilian security forces domestic experience, with soldiers and police officers engaging directly with the population (Müller & Steinke, 2018:229). Therefore, patrols made by heavily armed personnel would become part of Haitian citizens daily lives.

This over-securitized approach rendered much criticism towards the operation. Among the complaints was the fact that MINUSTAH aimed at responding only to the symptoms of violence and was excessively large in its military component – the initial authorized force, for instance, consisted of 1,622 police officers and 6,700 troops (United Nations Security Council, 2004d). Nevertheless, the peacekeeping rules of engagement limited peacekeepers in their actions when confronting armed groups, which rendered the mission passive and ineffective in the eyes of the Haitian population (Gauthier & Bonin, 2008:4-5). Still, operations conducted in the slums of Port-au-Prince during the MIF intervention and the first years of MINUSTAH would resort to the arbitrary use of violence, which further deteriorated the already unstable situation of Haiti and contributed to the negative image of the mission, perceived by many Haitians as an oppressive force instead of a “force for aid” (Korson, 2015:372; dos Santos Parra, 2019:489). Korson (2015:367) states that the encounters between peacekeepers and the Haitian community were primarily characterized by conflict.



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## 5.3 Local Perceptions of MINUSTAH

How peace operations are perceived by both international audiences and the host population can deeply influence the successful implementation of their mandates, for this perception can render legitimacy to the operations (Korson, 2015; Whalan, 2017). According to Whalan (2017:308), international legitimacy is linked to the mission's coherence with UN norms, the expectations regarding its positive outcomes, and the endorsement it receives from UN members. Having credibility in the eyes of the international community determines, for example, the amount of financial and physical support the operation will receive (Korson, 2015:357). In addition, as acknowledged in the Capstone Doctrine document, a successful peace operation must be recognized as legitimate especially by the host population (United Nations Department of Peace Operations, 2008:36). Gippert (2016:523) argues that the perceptions of the host population are important because peace operations are processes aimed at changing the functioning of institutions, as well as elements of the state's political order and the interactions between the state and its citizens.

In societies devastated by conflict, power is fragmented and therefore, there are various actors competing for it and for the loyalty of citizens (Whalan, 2017:309). Not rarely, paramilitary and other armed groups may be involved in this competition, and Fitz-Gerald (2004:85) argues that it is a common practice of these groups to offer security guarantees in exchange for the local community's support. The ability of these groups' leaders to defend or attack relies deeply on their relationship with the local population. Therefore, when international actors respond to conflict situations like these, the civilians become a core priority to military operations (Guttieri, 2004:83), and it is important to determine what is the basis for local support in order to adopt an approach that aims at shifting people's allegiance from the paramilitary groups to the international force (Fitz-Gerald, 2004:85). In this sense, Haiti has been involved in what Cockayne (2009:77) describes as a "protection competition", where two or more actors (the gangs, the national police and the peace mission) fight against each other over the right to control the use of violence in order to "protect" the country's population. Winning this protection competition could grant an operation local legitimacy, which in turn offers a rationale for the population to cooperate with it (Whalan, 2017).



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Guaranteeing the security of the Haitian population in face of the widespread violence was a priority for MINUSTAH, and the mission carried out a number of operations in order to take down the gangs that controlled life in the country's urban areas (Dorn, 2018:127-130). Hence, the mission had strong military and police components to deal with the threat posed by these armed gangs. As acknowledged by former force commander of MINUSTAH, Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, although the military alone cannot effectively perform all the activities entailed in missions' mandates, still "the military uniform… is highly symbolic to the people." (dos Santos Cruz, 2009:25) The blue helmets/berets are the face of a UN mission – they are the ones who people can easily identify on the streets during patrols, or monitoring electoral processes, or guaranteeing the delivery of humanitarian aid. Therefore, how UN troops and police officers act towards the citizens of the host country can deeply influence the support the mission receives and consequently its success.

Gippert (2016:525) argues that one of the sources of a mission's legitimacy is exactly the way its personnel treats the local population. Not coincidentally, some of the activities carried out by MINUSTAH personnel were identified as "hearts-and-minds activities", which were traditional military operations with the goal of gaining people's trust and hence create a viable atmosphere for the carrying-out of the mandate (Costa, 2009:20-21). Greenburg (2013:99) explains that these operations included educational and developmental projects aimed specifically at fostering the mission's moral authority. MINUSTAH's military personnel were involved daily in projects such as constructing and paving roads, or guaranteeing that the population has access to water, efforts that would generally improve the daily life of the citizens (Duarte, 2009:32). These visible outcomes or improvements in security can engender legitimacy in the eyes of the population, but they might not be enough (Gippert, 2016:525).

It was once believed that the deployment of a neutral international force to conflict-torn societies would be more easily accepted by local actors due to its impartiality. However, Whalan (2017:315) contends that contemporary peace operations reveal an opposite reality: achieving a legitimizing effect is easier when mission's personnel are familiar with the host country's culture, politics and language, for example. One of the



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themes approached by Hagman (2002:3-4) in his report was the acknowledgement that the UN missions deployed in Haiti during the 1990s lacked awareness about Haiti's social cleavages and political culture, hence they tended to adopt projects that did not fully take into account the situation on the ground and, as a result, the little success they obtained was fragile.

MINUSTAH seems to have faced the same problem – in its first years, the mission's more traditional approach (employed to deal with civil wars and not necessarily with a context of urban gang violence), did not offer a satisfactory response to Haiti's situation, and criminal activities around Port-au-Prince and other urban areas continued to rise (Cockayne, 2009:83). A more tangible example of MINUSTAH's misunderstandings was its Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) program, which was implemented in a traditional format and did not suit the Haitian reality. The program offered economic incentives to gang members that would just serve as a "retirement plan", while the underlying reasons for young people to join these gangs were not being addressed, engendering a belief that "crime pays" (Schuberth, 2017:241). Hence, the DDR program was criticized for not acknowledging that the armed gang members were not the real source of the threat, and disarming these people without addressing underlying issues such as lack of education and unemployment would not help to achieve the desired result (Cockayne, 2009:85).

Hagman further reports that the actions of the international actors during the first UN missions were not always clear to the Haitian population, which caused tension in the relationship between peacekeepers and Haitians and prevented the materialization of a viable working partnership (Hagman, 2002:3). The same is argued by Korson (2015:361) with relation to MINUSTAH: criticisms of the mission included confusion and lack of communication, issues that, if not addressed, would render MINUSTAH unsuccessful. By analysing various media reports about MINUSTAH, Korson (2015:364) found that UN interventions in Haiti, regardless of the type of mandate, have always been perceived in a negative way. One explanation offered by the author is that Haiti has undergone a number of international interventions since its independence, resulting in a number of contemporary concerns regarding the reasons, length and effectiveness of MINUSTAH (Korson, 2015:371).



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Indeed, as a country that emerged independent after a slave revolt in a period where slavery was the norm, Haiti has since then been perceived as a threat by great powers (Dubois, 2012). Its internal instability and many crises – derived from both internal and external factors – have been used as rationale for years of U.S. occupation, and various subsequent international operations (Douglas, 1927; Castor & Garafola, 1974; Malone, 1997; Hamann, 2009). As time passed, Haitians were increasingly greeting these operations with reluctance, which has also manifested in the form of active resistance (Lemay-Hébert, 2014:198-199). SC resolutions pertaining MINUSTAH – 1840 (2008c) and 1892 (2009d), for example – confirm that people often attacked mission personnel and facilities to show their discontentment with the operation. According to Lemay-Hébert (2014:201-202), specificities of the Haitian state-building process, such as its hierarchical society marked by social and racial tensions, the militarized political system, and the constant struggle between the wealthy few and an impoverished majority, allow for the understanding of such resistance as a structural factor of that society.

It is argued that the missions deployed in Haiti over the years had always been (at least to some extent) focused on responding to security issues without addressing the root causes of the country's instability, which rendered them inadequate for the task of winning the trust of Haitians (Cockayne, 2009:79). It took peacekeepers working in MINUSTAH approximately three years to start responding more effectively to the situation (Cockayne, 2009:83). The mission was only able to overcome the initial lack of legitimacy and could finally achieve some positive outcomes once a new approach was adopted. The new approach included the creation of an intelligence sector to help with information-gathering, the implementation of community violence reduction (CVR) projects, and increased efforts to recruit more women to integrate the Haitian National Police (dos Santos Parra, 2019:492). Nevertheless, the change in approach did not prevent the mission from being perceived as a return to international occupation, a view that has been present among Haitian since MINUSTAH's establishment (Lemay-Hébert, 2014:205). In addition to the over-securitized approach adopted by the mission, other complicating factors contributed to MINUSTAH's negative image not only amidst Haitian society but also amidst international actors. Among them, the high



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number of human rights abuses and of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) cases involving peacekeepers (Cockayne, 2009:88).

## 5.4 Sexual Exploitation and Abuse during MINUSTAH

### 5.4.1 The Condition of the Haitian Women before MINUSTAH

Taking into consideration (i) the fact that MINUSTAH had a high number of SEA cases involving UN peacekeepers, (ii) the argument that women peacekeepers can serve as moral deterrents of their male counterparts abusive behaviour, and (iii) data showing that there is a higher risk of SEA cases in situations where sexual violence was already rampant before the arrival of peacekeeping personnel (Nordås & Rustad, 2013:513), exploring the situation of women in Haiti prior to the deployment of the mission becomes a relevant factor for this study.

Bellegarde-Smith (2004:8) claims that the Haitian society cannot be fully understood without considering the status, role and concerns of Haitian women, whose condition "reflects the condition of Haiti itself". In Haiti, women now account for the majority of an estimate population of more than 11 million Haitians (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020), and throughout the country's history they have played important roles. For instance, a female vodou priest (*manbo*) officiated the ceremony that launched the slave revolution that culminated in Haiti's independence, and other women fought in the country's independence wars serving as spies, nurses and soldiers (Bellegarde-Smith, 2004:40-41). Additionally, they have always been key players in Haiti's economy, and many support their families through their modest earnings in the country's unstable informal market (Coleman & Iskenderian, 2010). They also integrated resistance movements during the U.S. occupation in Haiti, taking advantage of their freedom of movement as domestic workers and marketers to transport weapons and information to the rebel leaders of the *Caco*, a prominent resistance group (Sanders, 2009:1-2). However, the fact that they played active roles in Haiti's struggle for freedom did not necessarily translate into positive change for women. In her study, Charles (1995:137) explains that, since its creation, the Haitian state has discriminated against and excluded women.



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Haitian women have also always been involved in the fight for their own rights – for instance, in the end of the 1700s, women in the South of the country fought for equal pay during a period of semi-wage when Haiti was transitioning from slavery to freedom (Charles, 1995:138). Among the achievements resulting from women's struggle is the right to vote, which Charles (1995:139-140) believes offered the rationale for women to be perceived as full political subjects, and as such, become targets of the state-sanctioned violence of the Duvalier regime, which tortured, exiled, raped and executed women (Charles, 1995:139).

With the end of the dictatorship in 1986, social movements throughout Haiti were strengthened and female participation in these movements also increased. There was also an increase in the number of women's groups and feminist organizations throughout the country, the majority of which would later join the Lavalas movement and play a key role in the election of Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1990 (Charles, 1995:156). However, the military junta that overthrew Aristide in 1991 would again resort to violence to shut down all organizational activities. Women and girls who were part of the democratic struggle themselves, or were related to people who were part of the opposition, were targeted to suffer all forms of sexual violence – particularly gang rape and battery were used to disrupt communities and terrorize the whole Haitian population (Faedi Duramy, 2010:1032-1033).

Furthermore, the study by Faedi Duramy (2010) on the relationship between women and violence in Haiti has shown that the many years women have been subjected to violence have become one of the rationales for their involvement with armed groups, either as partners of gang members or as perpetrators of violence themselves. According to the author, women's cumulative victimization combined with a context of deprivation, stigmatization and social ostracism, and race and gender disparity, make women's choices in terms of security, survival and subsistence more limited (Faedi Duramy, 2010:1040-1041).

In summary, despite being part of the country's greatest struggles and being the backbone of Haiti's economy, women have always been discriminated against and always held a disadvantaged position. Since colonial times women would be raped by slave owners, as it could be noticed from the number of mixed-race children born in



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the country at that time (Faedi Duramy, 2014:19). Violence and discrimination against women became acceptable behaviour within Haitian society to the point where 80 percent of the men interviewed for a study in 2009 declared that they considered violence against women justifiable in cases of disobedience (Coleman & Iskenderian, 2010:124). Until 2005, rape was not even explicitly criminalized, and the country still does not have specific legislation against domestic violence or sexual harassment (Human Rights Watch, 2020). Even after the election of René Préval in 2006, when there was an increase in the overall number of criminal suspects finally being tried in Haitian courts, cases of violence against women that were tried remained low (Inter-American Comission on Human Rights, 2010). From the 62 rape cases reported to five police stations of Port-au-Prince between June and August 2010, only one had reached the prosecution stage by the end of 2011 (Office of the High-Commissioner for Human Rights - Haiti, 2012). While it is true that women are now more likely to report cases of sexual and domestic violence, many of them fail to do so due to lack of financial resources and the fact that the numerous responsibilities within the family hinder them to dedicate the necessary time to pursue legal proceedings (United States Department of State, 2020).

### 5.4.2 Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by Peacekeepers

The historical background of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against Haitian women discussed in the previous section should be taken into consideration when planning the deployment of a peace operation. In the first report assessing Haiti's situation prior to the deployment of MINUSTAH, the UN acknowledged that there had been an increase in sexual violence against women, and not only recommended that the mission addresses SGBV but also emphasized the need for more female police officers, and officers trained to deal with victims of sexual violence (United Nations Security Council, 2004b). But to which extent did the UN really take into consideration how local women would be impacted by a large number of male soldiers patrolling the streets?

Women who have been victims of rape claim that the establishment of the UN mission in the country did not prevent these crimes from happening – the difference was that they began to occur in a more secretive way (Faedi Duramy, 2010:1047). In fact,



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throughout the mission's duration, both uniformed and non-uniformed personnel had been associated to various cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, but in the stories collected from the field for Lee and Bartels's (2020:180,187) study, soldiers constituted 93.6 percent of the UN personnel identified by the interviewees. In 2013, a leaked report placed MINUSTAH among the UN missions with the largest number of allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation (Awori, Lutz & Thapa, 2013).

The report also pointed out some specificities of the MINUSTAH context that could increase the risk of SEA activities, including but not restricted to: (i) the feeling among peacekeepers that they were on "vacation" while deployed in Haiti, especially due to emphasis on recreational activities in face of the absence of defined security threats; and (ii) mission personnel's discrediting of the host population, which caused allegations of SEA to be dismissed as false (Awori, Lutz & Thapa, 2013:17). The UN reports that, from 2007 to 2017, the number of SEA allegations in MINUSTAH varied from 3 (lowest number, registered in 2008) to 13 (highest number, registered in 2013) (United Nations, 2020a). However, according to the leaked expert report, there is concern regarding underreporting. Moreover, the number of allegations do not match the number of cases because not all the occurrences are reported to the Conduct and Discipline Teams (CDTs), which were established to centralize all cases of misconduct in order to generate comprehensive data on the issue (Awori, Lutz & Thapa, 2013:13-14).

The disadvantaged condition of women is exacerbated in countries where UN missions are usually deployed, which creates a situation of power imbalance between peacekeepers and the host population that becomes fertile ground for sexual exploitation and abuse to happen (Lee, S. & Bartels, 2020:178). In Haiti, the levels of female literacy and employment are low, most women live in conditions of socio-economic vulnerability and, therefore, may end up being prone to adopting transactional sex as a survival strategy (Vahedi, Bartels & Lee, 2019:2-4). The study by Lee, S. and Bartels (2020:188-189) confirms that many women and girls would engage in sexual relationships with peacekeepers in exchange for money and goods. But, in general, peacekeepers' narratives about women from the host community sometimes tend to portray the latter as those who were in control by "choosing" to



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engage in sexual intercourse with soldiers, and also imply that these women were safe because they were getting the money or supplies they needed (Higate, 2007). Although some relationships might be consensual, in a situation of great power imbalance, such accounts fail to consider these women's contexts and whether they are really choosing to exchange sex for food or being compelled to do so by their own condition (Higate, 2007:108). Moreover, Jennings (2019:33-34) has demonstrated that the very way in which peacekeepers construct the local population affects the incidence of SEA cases. Her study shows that the discourse used by peacekeepers to describe the local population is often gendered and raced. Especially with regard to women and their bodies, peacekeepers would resort to language that implied that local women were more sexualized and sexually available than other people, and that they would pursue sexual intercourse with mission personnel in predatory ways (Jennings, 2019:33-34).

In the case of the sexual encounters between Haitian women and MINUSTAH uniformed personnel, Lee, S. and Bartels (2020:188-189) further show that Haitians perceived peacekeepers to be the agents who really held power and control, as they were the ones who could come and go as they pleased, and would soon return to their countries, leaving behind whatever they had done during deployment. Moreover, whenever women have expressed their consent, they did so because peacekeepers had promised them financial support and even marriage (Vahedi, Bartels & Lee, 2019:8-9). Taking this context into account, one could conclude that even when peacekeepers are not the ones initiating the relationship, their actions could fit the UN definition of sexual exploitation: "any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes…" (United Nations, 2003:1).

The many allegations of SEA by UN peacekeepers, alongside the argument that the presence of female peacekeepers can help reduce the number of SEA cases, raises the question of whether a more gender-balanced force could actually help contain the abusive behaviour of male peacekeepers. Karim and Beardsley's (2016) study addresses this question. The scholars have noticed that when missions deploy a higher number of female peacekeepers, it is likely that less SEA cases will happen



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mainly because (i) having more women deployed could reduce the number of possible offenders, since abuses are mostly committed by men; (ii) it is expected that the female presence among peacekeeping forces can counterbalance the mix of militarized masculinity and patriarchy within troops (Karim & Beardsley, 2016:104, 107).

### 5.5 Female Participation in MINUSTAH

Among the main arguments advanced by those who advocate for increased female participation in peace operations are: (i) women can contribute to the establishment of a good relationship between peacekeepers and civilians, therefore becoming an invaluable asset in information-gathering; (ii) women's presence can have a "civilizing effect" and help reduce cases of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by their male counterparts (Olsson & Tryggestad, 2001:2). Whatever essentialist traits these arguments entail, studies have suggested that missions with a higher number of female participants tend to be more successful due to the confidence they inspire in the host population (Carey, 2001; Mazurana, 2003). Women are said to have better negotiating skills as opposed to men, and they also are considered to be more compassionate (Alchin, Gouws & Heinecken, 2018:5). According to the operational effectiveness argument, these characteristics cause women to be perceived as more approachable by the host community, especially by local women. Therefore, considering the Haitian context of widespread violence against women and of lack of legitimacy of the operation in the eyes of the Haitian people, two questions arise: (i) where were the women in MINUSTAH?; (ii) "how did female peacekeepers contribute to MINUSTAH's operational effectiveness?"

When it comes to gender issues and peacekeeping, resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), adopted in October 2000 is of great significance. It is considered a landmark by various authors (Dharmapuri, 2011; Donadio & Rial, 2015; Karim, 2017a) especially because, for the first time, women had their specific needs in time of conflict officially addressed by a Security Council resolution. UNSCR 1325 expresses the international community's concern regarding the disproportional impact of conflict on the lives of women and, most importantly, acknowledges women not only as victims of conflict but also as playing an important role in conflict prevention and conflict resolution. Therefore, UNSCR 1325 emphasizes that women should have equal participation in



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peace and security efforts (United Nations Security Council, 2000). In this sense, the Security Council appeals to member states and to the Secretary-General to work towards the expansion of women's roles and the increase of female participation at all decision-making levels of national, regional and international institutions, and among military, police, and civilian components of peace operations (United Nations Security Council, 2000). Rupesinghe, Stamnes and Karlsrud (2018:206) claim that the most relevant and most contested pillar of UNSCR 1325 is indeed participation – the goal is to increase the number of women involved in peace operations in order to achieve gender parity.

Karim (2017a:824) points to the fact that since the adoption of UNSCR 1325, gender has been mentioned in almost every Security Council resolution that sets out a mission's mandate. Confirming this, commitment to UNSCR 1325 was explicitly expressed in resolution 1542, which establishes MINUSTAH's mandate (United Nations Security Council, 2004d). However, when it comes to the participation of women in different components and in the decision-making levels of the mission, MINUSTAH seems to have fallen short.

Throughout its 14 years, MINUSTAH had only one woman serving as Special Representative of the Secretary-General – Ms. Sandra Honoré, who was appointed to the job in 2013 and served as chief of MINUSTAH until its end in 2017 (United Nations, 2013b). Also, according to the gender reports made available by the Department of Peace Operations (2020a) the percentage of women peacekeepers remained low among the military and police contingents of the mission. Figures 5.1 and 5.2 show these numbers measured against the percentage that would still be left in order to achieve the 30 percent "critical mass", that is, the percentage of women considered to be the minimum needed in order for them to be capable of influencing and igniting change among the men, who constitute the majority group (Skjelsbæk, 2007:31).



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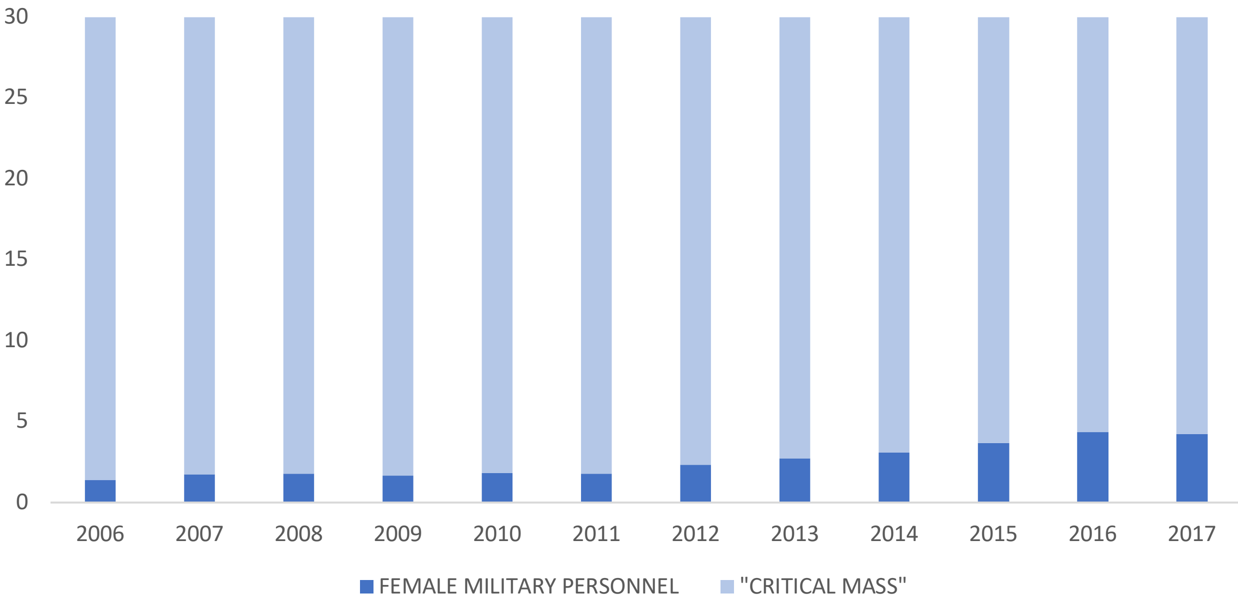
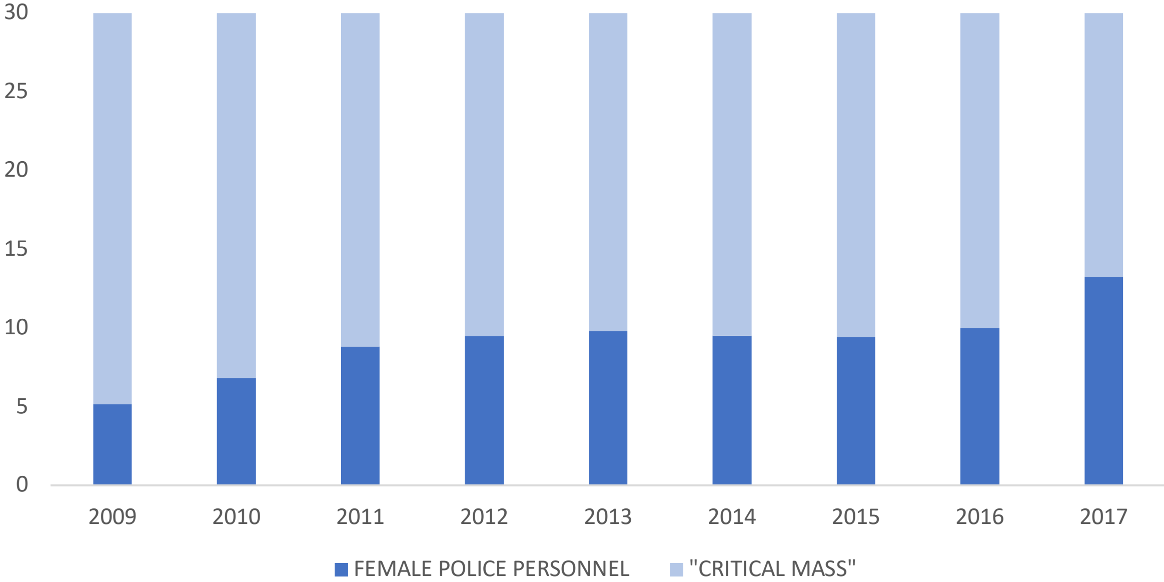
Figure 5.1: Average Percentage of Female Military Personnel in MINUSTAH, in relation to the 30 percent "Critical Mass"




*Source: based on data available on https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/gender*

Figure 5.2: Average Percentage of Female Police Personnel in MINUSTAH, in relation to the 30 percent "Critical Mass"




*Source: based on data available on https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/gender*



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Most military and police personnel deployed in MINUSTAH came from Latin America and Asia, where many countries still have not showed much progress in integrating women into security institutions (Solhjell *et al.*, 2012:27-28). Specifically in Latin American countries, the integration of women into the armed forces has not been a linear process. They began to be accepted first in the professional corps (to work as medical doctors, nurses and engineers, for example), then as commissioned officials, and at least until 2010, in some countries, women were not accepted as part of military troops at all (Donadio & Mazzotta, 2010:50-57). Moreover, as expected, they are still underrepresented in security institutions. This could explain why the number of female peacekeepers in MINUSTAH was low throughout the mission, and why they would be mostly working as medical doctors and nurses.

But besides the numbers offered by the DPO in its gender reports, it was not possible to find disaggregated data on the number of women deployed in MINUSTAH per contributing country or per function, for example, or specific information about the tasks undertaken by female peacekeepers. Information is usually generalized, describing women's role in the mission in accordance to the operational effectiveness argument, or come from informal sources such as a short video – uploaded to a generic YouTube channel but apparently produced by MINUSTAH's Military Public Information Office – where Chilean peacekeepers serving in MINUSTAH talk about their work as medical staff and helicopter pilots (Military Public Information Office, 2017).

Overall, there is little research regarding female integration in the military component of MINUSTAH. As Solhjell (2012) has noted, in general, research about gender-sensitive peacekeeping within the military component of UN missions is limited. Nevertheless, the research conducted by Donadio and Rial (2013:118-121) can offer some insight on how MINUSTAH's military component dealt with the integration of a gender perspective. According to the authors, the gender perspective adopted involved the projects carried out by personnel with the local community, the situation of the female soldiers and general matters of conduct and discipline – this last factor, however, was more emphasized than the others. The interviews with MINUSTAH personnel revealed that: (i) members of the military contingent associated "gender" with issues of sexual exploitation and abuse; (ii) just one of the contingents made use



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of the Military Guidelines for integration of gender perspective; (iii) most women were limited to support tasks, and few had the opportunity to interact with the local population; (iv) women peacekeepers showed no desire for special treatment – they wanted to be considered equals in terms of rights and duties (Donadio & Rial, 2013). With regard to training, military personnel received basic information during a pre-deployment module and, once in the field, an induction training would address the topic "gender" for about 40 minutes – which cannot be considered sufficient to deal with such a complex topic (Solhjell *et al.*, 2012:27-32).

It is important to mention that MINUSTAH had an all-female formed police unit (FFPU) from Bangladesh for most of its duration. Because of the attention an all-female contingent receives, there are more sources of information specifically mentioning deployments of this type and the next paragraphs will be dedicated to discussing the deployment of all-female police units. However, at the same time, not too many studies were found that discussed specifically the Bangladeshi female FPU in Haiti, so studies regarding the Indian FFPU deployed in Liberia (Henry, 2012; Pruitt, 2013; Karim, 2017a), which are more abundant, will be drawn upon in order to compare and contrast both cases.

The all-female contingent was deployed after Haiti was struck by an earthquake in 2010, with the goal of providing humanitarian services related to primary education and healthcare, and to help preventing cases of violence against women (Zaman & Biswas, 2013:188). The trend has been previously observed by Karim (2017a:835) with regard to the women deployed as part of the Indian all-female unit in Liberia. These objectives are in line with a more essentialist idea of female "nature" and a gendered division of labour in peacekeeping that sustain the operational effectiveness argument. However, this should not overshadow the fact that, as police officers, these women were also providers of security and must be trained in assaulting, shooting, and in anti-riot tactics (Pruitt, 2013:67).

As FPUs are generally anti-riot forces, MINUSTAH officers already in the field expected the female FPU to be involved in this kind of activities, as shown in the highlights of "A Journey of a Thousand Miles: Peacekeepers" – a documentary that



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followed the routine of some of these Bangladeshi women in Haiti (Obaid-Chinoy & Gandbhir, 2015). Battharai's (2016) review of the documentary calls attention to how these confrontational situations to which the female officers were exposed revealed the deficient training they received, and their lack of awareness of the state of affairs in Haiti, even though they probably received information about the history and geopolitical importance of the country (Zaman & Biswas, 2013:188). Lack of training is listed by Pruitt (2013:67) as one of the various barriers to women's deployment. The Bangladeshi women had to receive continuous remedial training during their time with MINUSTAH and eventually could better adjust to the job at hand (Bhattarai, 2016). This may lead to the conclusion that, in general, as women are being expected to be "soft" and perform more humanitarian tasks even when they are part of security forces, they end up receiving technical and tactical training that may be far from sufficient. Yet, when given the opportunity and the appropriate training, women may be capable of performing the same tasks as their male counterparts, who are considered to be more prepared to assume frontline positions. Moreover, having the tactical skills is important so women can protect themselves once they are in the field, otherwise they might be regarded as a liability to the operation.

Issues of insufficient training are not restricted to technical and tactical capacity. Such concern has been voiced by female peacekeepers from other contributing countries, especially regarding interaction with victims. Rwandan peacekeepers deployed in the United Nations Missions in Darfur and South Sudan (UNAMID and UNMISS) felt that the training they received did not prepare them well enough to continuously engage with victims of sexual violence in the host country, and that reality differs greatly from the situations they roleplay during training (Holmes, 2019). In the documentary "A journey of a thousand miles: peacekeepers", one of the female officers reported that she must have the resolve of a soldier, and the affection of a mother (Obaid-Chinoy & Gandbhir, 2015). Such expectations are rarely (if ever) directed at male soldiers and police officers, as noticed by David Peck in an interview made with one of the documentary's directors (Gandbhir & Lalonde, 2015). As Orchard (2020:118) explains, women are expected to play a dual role, and the implications of that are not taken into account in the training that is provided to them.



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The case of Rwandan peacekeepers presented by Holmes (2019) is an example of how these assumptions and expectations affect the self-perception of these women peacekeepers. Those awaiting deployment had embraced the stereotype of the empathetic and compassionate female soldier and thought they could do a good job in aiding local women, while those who were returning from the field stated that the task of helping victims of violence was more overwhelming than expected. In interviews, the Bangladeshi officers deployed in Haiti echoed the idea that the host population, especially women and children, thought of them as being more approachable than male officers, that their presence ensured greater psychological support for victims of sexual violence, and that they can serve as role models for women and girls in the host community (UN Women, 2012; United Nations, 2013a). The same behaviour was noted among female peacekeepers deployed in Liberia – in accordance with what is argued about the uniqueness of female peacekeepers, women deployed in the field believe that they are better suited for interactions with members of the host community, that they respond better to the needs of women who have been victims of sexual abuse, and that they can inspire women in the host community to join the security institutions in their country (Karim, 2017a).

Nevertheless, whenever the female FPU deployed in Haiti had the chance to go on patrols and interact with the host population, this contact would be limited not only due to their training being normally focused on anti-riot action but also due to the language barrier (Donadio & Rial, 2013). The issue of peacekeepers and Haitians speaking different languages was also pointed out by Solhjell *et al.* (2012:27-32) as a factor that might cause a feeling of distance and distrust among the population. Language is possibly one of the most tangible evidences that gender alone does not guarantee bonding between peacekeepers and female citizens in the host country. Additionally, peacekeepers from the FFPU deployed in Haiti reported that the local population would disregard their gender and see them simply as uniformed soldiers, coming to them primarily to ask for food and supplies, not necessarily to report any type of abuse (Kapoor, 2015:30). The same kind of response from the host community was reported by female peacekeepers deployed in Liberia (Pruitt, 2013:68).



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Another issue to which Henry (2012) calls attention is the idea of a "shared sisterhood" among women from the global South, that assumes female peacekeepers coming from such countries will easily connect with local women. This assumption ignores the contextual differences that may in fact distance peacekeepers and local people. For instance, when studying the case of the FFPU in Liberia, Henry (2012:25) concluded that cultural differences caused the Indian peacekeepers to see themselves as different, distancing themselves from what they considered a shameful behaviour on the part of Liberian women. Another study has concluded that the Indian peacekeepers were not exactly sensitive towards Liberian women, which goes against the generalist argument that women are inherently empathetic (Pruitt, 2013:69).

To address the shortcomings of traditional training, the DPO joined UN Women – the UN entity dedicated to gender equality and empowerment of women – in creating a course for female military officers. The course is aimed at providing women with the necessary knowledge so they can perform their tasks more effectively, and also to increase the number of female officers prepared to be deployed at short notice. Besides the underlying concepts and policies of peace operations, the course also offers unique training on communication techniques, civil-military coordination, early warning signs of sexual violence, knowledge about the consequences of violence against women, how to operate in mixed military teams, community outreach and expectations management, gender-responsive peacekeeping, intelligence gathering and service referrals for female survivors (Orchard, 2020:120). This course targets female military officers because, as Orchard (2020:120) puts it, they are "asked to do things their male colleagues are not." Knowledge about these topics, however, should be part of every peacekeeper's training, regardless of gender.

### 5.6 Gender Mainstreaming in MINUSTAH

Although the main objective of this study is to explore gender parity within MINUSTAH's uniformed personnel and the impact of female peacekeepers, it is also important to discuss the greater strategy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all levels of UN peace operations, which goes beyond the inclusion of women in uniformed components. Gender mainstreaming is understood as "the process of



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assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels." (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1997). The key objective of this assessment is to guarantee that both men and women get to participate in the post-conflict rebuild of their nation (United Nations Department of Peace Operations, 2005:2). Thus, the small percentage of female peacekeepers within MINUSTAH does not mean that other strategies were not adopted by the mission personnel to mainstream a gender perspective.

According to reports of the Secretary-General addressed to the Security Council throughout MINUSTAH's duration, some of the actions through which the mission has tried to mainstream gender include: (i) developing gender sensitization campaigns (United Nations Security Council, 2004a:12); (ii) holding workshops to help define measures to combat violence against women (United Nations Security Council, 2005a:10); (iii) promoting and supporting the participation of women in Haiti's electoral processes (United Nations Security Council, 2005b:2-3) and offering training and technical support to newly elected women (United Nations Security Council, 2011:9; 2016:8); (iv) developing training material regarding gender issues for the Haitian National Police and supporting the establishment of reception units for women victims of sexual violence (United Nations Security Council, 2007a:9); (v) providing training on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse for MINUSTAH personnel (United Nations Security Council, 2006a:13; 2009a:13-14); (vi) supporting projects within the mission's Community Violence Reduction (CVR) program that specifically targeted women (United Nations Security Council, 2007a:8; 2008a:6); (vii) and carrying out registration exercises to encourage Haitian women to join the National Police (United Nations Security Council, 2007a:9; 2017:5). Unfortunately, there is no information in the reports about how these activities were carried out. For example, about how the women who would take part in such activities were selected, or the type of training that was offered for the police officers that would work in police bases specifically to deal with victims of gender-based violence.

The conclusion that can be drawn from MINUSTAH reports and resolutions is that, except for a few resolutions requesting and supporting the inclusion of women in Haiti's



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political processes – for instance, resolutions 1892 (2009d), 1927 (2010a), 1944 (2010b) and 2119 (2013b) – most resolutions adopted by the Security Council throughout the duration of MINUSTAH, only addressed women as victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. As stated by Karim (2017b), not all UN mandates include the issue of increasing women's participation – emphasis is usually placed on the protection pillar, especially with regard to sexual and gender-based violence. This can be noticed in the shortened list of activities presented above: most of the programs adopted to mainstream gender were aimed at helping women who had been victims of sexual violence.

## 5.7 Conclusion

There is an assumption that missions with a humanitarian approach tend to have a larger number of women among their personnel. However, despite having human rights as one of its pillars and carrying out various humanitarian tasks, MINUSTAH had low female representation among its military and police personnel. Other weak spots of the mission, which according to the operational effectiveness argument could have been minimized with a stronger presence of women peacekeepers, were the lack of legitimacy and the many cases of sexual exploitation and abuse. However, the few women deployed in the military component were mostly employed in support tasks, and the all-female FPU did not receive proper training to perform as an anti-riot force, nor could engage properly with the host population during the few opportunities they had mostly because of the language barrier. The little interaction of these women peacekeepers with the local people cannot provide enough evidence of the real impact they had in the mission regarding what is said about bridging the relationship between peacekeepers and the community. Additionally, the number of female peacekeepers deployed in Haiti was far from the percentage considered desirable to prompt change in an environment where they represent the minority group. Therefore, their impact on the mission itself is also difficult to assess. As the many cases of SEA for which MINUSTAH is remembered up to this day show, simply having a few more women among the peacekeepers is not exactly a deterrent of male aggressiveness. Nevertheless, women peacekeepers seem to have internalized the assumptions that are made about their job as peacekeepers, causing them to believe they are prepared



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to engage with the host community and protect other women from violence based on the fact that they are women and, therefore, inherently less violent and more empathetic.



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# 6 CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 6.1 Introduction

Based on the discussions carried out throughout the previous chapters, the present chapter offers a summary of the arguments and findings of this study, and indicates topics that can be further discussed in future research.

This study discussed how the UN peacekeeping mechanism had to go through changes in order to respond to the conflicts emerging in the post-Cold War era, and how these changes required UN peacekeepers to have a wider range of skills. Simply put, the new tasks peacekeepers would have to undertake would put them in direct contact with the host community in various situations – such as when they need to oversee electoral processes, guarantee the delivery of humanitarian aid, or carry out DDR programs. This new reality raised concerns regarding specific ways in which women are affected by conflict. As a result, the Security Council adopted the Women, Peace and Security agenda, and various resolutions highlighting the importance of increasing the number of women in peace operations. The arguments in favour of deploying more women in UN missions focus on the unique contribution women could make to conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding, in face of the new tasks that would be assigned to peacekeepers.

The variety of new tasks carried out by UN peacekeepers reflect the policy adopted by the organization to address not only threats emerging from the military realm but also those related to the concept of human security. In this sense, MINUSTAH offers an example of how states' domestic political and social configuration came to be framed as a threat to international security and, hence, ignite the deployment of peace missions. MINUSTAH peacekeepers would have to deal specifically with the threats posed by the armed gangs that controlled the urban areas of Haiti, not necessarily with a context of ongoing civil war. However, the over-securitized approach of the mission has caused the intervention to be perceived by Haitians as a return to international occupation, and not as the rescue force it intended to be. Moreover, the mission's image was marred by the various cases of sexual exploitation and abuse involving peacekeepers taking advantage of their position in relation to Haitian women.



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Among the arguments in favour of integrating women into the uniformed component of UN peace operations are claims that women can better connect with the host population and improve the mission's image due to their inherent "peaceful nature" and empathy. Also, it is argued that female presence can serve as a moral deterrent to prevent their male counterparts from engaging in criminal activities such as sexual exploitation and abuse. However, the arguments offered to justify the integration of women into UN peace operations, despite being widely advocated and accepted, could end up perpetuating gender stereotypes that, in turn, could maintain women largely excluded from the public sphere of action and from effectively contributing to peace processes in general. For instance, one of the results could be the reinforcement of the gender division of labour in peace operations, where women continue to be assigned support roles in the administrative and medical staff functions of a mission, hence being largely away from direct contact with the population they are supposed to assist.

This study has shown that, in Haiti, other challenges to the deployment of female peacekeepers became apparent – more specifically (i) the faulting training women receive to deal with both the risks they may face in the field and the victims of SEA; (ii) issues such as language barrier and cultural difference, which may negatively impact their relationship with the host population. Additionally, while research has shown that having a greater number of women peacekeepers in the field indeed contributes to less SEA cases being reported, it is not guaranteed that such crimes will not occur, since the culture of the military and other security institutions is still rooted in patriarchal and masculine values that usually foster the development of violent masculinities. In this sense and taking into consideration the concept of "critical mass", this study has shown that in MINUSTAH (and in other UN missions), the number of female peacekeepers has been way below what should be the minimum percentage a minority group must reach to be able to prompt change in an institution.

### 6.2 Summary of Findings

The UN considers the achievement of gender parity in the uniformed components of peace operations a step towards the greater goal of achieving gender equality in its



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missions. Chapter three has discussed the arguments for the greater integration of women in peace operations, among which are: (i) women peacekeepers can bond more easily with the host population, especially women and children; (ii) they can better aid local women who have been victims of SGBV; (iii) they can help improve a mission's image in the eyes of the local population hence fostering local legitimacy.

Therefore, the UN has been setting strategies to increase the number of female peacekeepers deployed in the field. However, the target percentage set by the DPO does not take into consideration the growth variations across categories of uniformed personnel, nor the challenges to women's deployment stemming from factors such as the low percentage of women in national police and military institutions of contributing countries. Moreover, simply increasing the number of women is not enough to attain the overarching goal of achieving gender equality. As discussed in chapter three, the arguments that are widely used in favour of increasing female participation in UN peace operations can also help perpetuate stereotypes. This, in turn, ends up reinforcing the current gendered division of labour that has women assuming secondary or support positions, which ultimately restrict the very benefits they are expected to bring to the mission, while men continue to assume frontline and leadership positions within the mission.

In chapter five, this study has shown that women peacekeepers are expected to perform a wide range of functions that their male counterparts are not. However, they do not receive the necessary training to do so. The all-female FPU deployed in Haiti was neither fully prepared to serve as the anti-riot force they were expected to be, nor could fully engage with the community because they did not have the necessary language skills. The example of the Rwandan female peacekeepers deployed in Somalia and South Sudan further stresses the need for training regarding how to deal with victims of SGBV. In order to address this matter, the DPO has decided to create a pre-deployment course focused on helping female officers gain the necessary skills to perform their tasks in the field. Yet, the fact that this course – addressing important issues to every peacekeeper such as early warning signs of sexual violence and service referrals for survivors – is tailored for female but not for male peacekeepers



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reveals another salient fact: the overwhelming expectation placed on women, while men and masculinities remains unaddressed in the WPS agenda.

With regard to the specific case of MINUSTAH, the discussion in chapter five further shows that: (i) reflecting the low integration of women in national militaries and police institutions of contributing countries, the number of women deployed in MINUSTAH was not sufficient to substantially impact the masculinized environment of the mission; (ii) there is not enough information about the tasks carried out by female peacekeepers in MINUSTAH; (iii) their interaction with the local population might have been negatively impacted due to circumstances such as language barrier and cultural differences; (iv) little is known about the perceptions of the local population regarding the female peacekeepers. Based on these factors, it is not possible to assess the real impact and contributions of the female peacekeepers deployed in Haiti.

### 6.3 Final Considerations and Recommendations

This study has focused on the impact of female peacekeepers and on one of the UN strategies to achieve gender equality in peacekeeping, which is achieving gender parity in the uniformed component of its peace missions. Considering that the UN depends on the contributions of member states to create its peacekeeping forces, the low percentage of women in peace operations' uniformed components may be reflecting the low percentage of women in national security institutions in general. Therefore, having more studies assessing the integration of women in national security institutions – such as the one by Donadio and Mazzotta (2010), addressing female integration into the armed forces of Latin American countries – could, for example, help understanding variations on the deployment of female peacekeepers by different contributing countries, and also assess the effectiveness of national policies aimed at increasing female representation within these institutions (Smit & Tidblad-Lundholm, 2018:27-29). Studies such as the one by Drumond and Rebelo (2020) – which addresses the National Action Plans (NAPs) adopted in South American Countries – are also needed, as they are an important tool to better understand to which extent countries are adopting the gender mainstreaming strategies that are being discussed in the UN, and how they adapt and apply such strategies to their specific contexts.



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Even if gender parity is achieved in the uniformed component, true gender equality will not be possible if women continue to be denied access to positions that are traditionally considered “masculine”. Most women serving in the military component of MINUSTAH were performing support functions, such as administrative staff, nurses and doctors, and had little to no contact with the local population (Solhjell *et al.*, 2012:28, 32). Hence, despite having equal access to be part of a peace operation, it has been shown by various studies that women usually do not have equal opportunity to serve in all areas. Current gender reports from the DPO offer only the number of women deployed in each category of uniformed service – troops, staff officers, individual police and formed police units. Information about the position these women assume within the mission is not disclosed by the organization itself. The current “Policy on Gender Responsive Peacekeeping” requests gender reports that are more thorough, offering data that is not only disaggregated by gender but also by age (United Nations Department of Peace Operations & United Nations Department of Field Support, 2018). Such initiative partially responds to the concerns expressed by Smit and Tidblad-Lundholm (2018:27-29) regarding how UN data collection could be improved in order to better assess gender integration in UN peace missions. Yet, more qualitative reports should also assess the positions these women undertake within the mission’s military and police components, something that has not yet been considered in the UN gender reports. At the moment, the information about women’s position within peace operations comes usually from field research. Therefore, more research should be encouraged to explore whether women deployed in peace operations are indeed given the opportunity and resources to fully comply with what is expected from them, and to really impact the communities they are expected to support.

As argued by Jennings (2011:8), if female peacekeepers are expected to play roles traditionally seen as feminine and behave in a way that conforms to a certain type of femininity, increasing the number of women in peace operations could be considered a void attempt of achieving gender equality. It is important to make sure that, within security institutions and peace operations’ forces, women are granted access to different positions. Without knowing more about the type of tasks carried out by women peacekeepers, it is difficult to assess the positive impact associated with their presence in the field.



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With regard to how these women peacekeepers could impact the host community, few studies address the perceptions of the local population regarding the peace mission, and female peacekeepers in particular. Karim (2017a:839), for instance, has found that Liberians had mixed feelings about the female peacekeepers deployed in their country. While the average response was that locals found women peacekeepers to be more competent than their male counterparts, only 15 out of the 1,280 female respondents reported having had the chance to interact with female peacekeepers. This data serves to confirm the barriers women peacekeepers still face to being able to interact with the population, which the scholar associates with the fact that most female peacekeepers are still assigned "feminine" roles within peace missions. Karim's study also shows that (i) respondents did not think they were better protected from rape because of the women in the field; (ii) women peacekeepers had little influence on local women's choice to join the military or police. Unfortunately, it was not possible to find formal studies about how Haitian people perceived female peacekeepers and their work. Therefore, assessing the real impact of women peacekeepers in Haiti is difficult. Overall, it is not possible to confirm the claims regarding women's unique contribution to peace operations without taking into consideration how they are perceived by the local community, so more studies discussing this topic are needed.

The various expectations about women's presence in the field highlight another issue: how women are required to do more things in a mission than their male counterparts. The fact that women are portrayed as the sole solution for increasing the effectiveness of peace operations has already been highlighted by Jennings (2011), for example, and Orchard (2020) explains that the course for female officers was developed because women are expect to play a double role in peace missions, while male officers are not. This factor raises another important question: if male peacekeepers are the ones said to be in need of being "tamed", why are they not receiving better gender-sensitive training? Although some studies focus on problematic masculinities, how they negatively impact peace operations and the need to address this topic, men and masculinities are not necessarily part of the WPS agenda, as they should be (Myrttinen, 2019).



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Whenever gender is addressed in UN documents or practices, there are few to no mentions about men, unless it is implicitly presenting them as those who hold power and perpetrate violence against women (Solhjell & Gjelsvik, 2013:29). As argued by Myrttinen (2019:91), this “invisibilization of masculinities” can lead to the perpetuation of gender roles for both men and women, and sustain hierarchies of gender inequality. It could be argued that, because of the perceived interchangeability between gender and women, male soldiers may interpret gender issues as something related solely to women, and therefore may not fully understand their position within the matter or take part in questioning their own behaviour. This could be exemplified in the reporting of seminars and workshops about gender, UNSCR 1325 and female integration carried out by MINUSTAH having an audience of 90% women, and being attended by women leaders, and women journalists (United Nations Securuty Council, 2015).

This is not to say that having more women participating in such events is not important. However, simply focusing on placing well-informed women in environments that are still dominated by masculine norms (known as the “add women and stir” approach) neither deals with the construction of masculinities and femininities nor with how they relate to one another. Thus, there may be reproduction of gendered inequalities and ideologies that sustain violence and vulnerabilities, as well as prevent women’s increased and meaningful participation at the social, economic, and political levels (Myrttinen, 2019:92-94). As Orchard (2020:119) states, “more is expected of military women in peacekeeping than simply performing their military role.” Male peacekeepers, on the other hand, continue to be mere spectators. Hence, more in-depth research about the training offered to male peacekeepers should also be encouraged in order to discuss the shortcomings – such as how the language may imply that gender is a women’s issue, or that it relates only to the prevention of SEA – that have been pointed out by scholars.

The approach that has been adopted so far regarding female integration in UN missions, unfortunately, tends to perpetuate stereotypes. There is still the need to do more than deploying women in peace operations expecting that their presence will hinder the violent behaviour of their male counterparts, and that they will easily bond with local women, thus making the mission more effective. It is important to also make



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men aware of their role, which calls for actions and strategies that go beyond offering guidelines on how they should behave towards the women of the host society. Without properly addressing the challenges posed by certain constructs of masculinity, and of the position of power that peacekeepers hold in relation to the host population, these guidelines (the "Code of Personal Conduct for Blue Helmets"), end up being seen by peacekeepers as "just another piece of paper to put in your pocket." (Higate, 2007:112) Addressing the reproduction of violent masculinities and including this topic in the peacekeeping agenda could be a good start to stop treating women as the sole bearers of the responsibility to bring about change in peace operations. As argued by Enloe (2017), patriarchal values and beliefs are deep-rooted in societies, continue to be appealing for both men and women, are adaptable and reinvented from time to time. Thus, they need to be constantly exposed and challenged, which requires reflexivity and self-examination of our possible complicities.



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