# WOMEN AND POLICING IN LATIN AMERICA:

# A REVISED BACKGROUND PAPER

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## INTRODUCTION [1]

Engendering the police in Latin America is a challenging but necessary goal to ensure women's rights – especially the right to live without violence – and equitable democratization. Specialized police stations for women (hereafter women's police stations or WPS) have been at the forefront of the fight against violence against women since the first WPS was founded in Brazil in 1985. Gender mainstreaming in the police is a much newer initiative but it also has important consequences for women's exercise of their rights and, as such, their experience of and contribution to democracy.

These initiatives are the result of growing attention to the need for state action to address violence against women and women's rights in international and national contexts. Over the past twenty years, upholding women's right to live without violence has gained acceptance as a responsibility of the state through various international agreements. The popularity of and need for the WPS is evident in the demand for them expressed by both the population in general and the women's movement, as well as the dramatic increases in reportings of crimes after WPS are opened. Though the initial demand often comes from women's movements, soon afterwards that demand gets taken up as an interest by the state, in particular by the police. Another indicator is the ongoing growth in number of facilities in countries where they already exist, and more countries setting up WPS. There are now about thirteen Latin American countries that offer specialized facilities to address violence against women, and many more who have special procedures or training programs for police. By contrast, gender mainstreaming has emerged more as a result of external pressure from donors and technical assistance than a felt need on the force or mobilizing by the local women's movement.

The initial findings point out that WPS and gender mainstreaming are undoubtedly vital initiatives for improving women's citizenship and contributing to good governance. There is a unanimous opinion in the literature that the WPS are innovative and should be strengthened. They protect women against threats to their security and have important consequences for women's human and citizenship rights by providing access to legal, medical, and psychological services that these users, most of them poor, may not otherwise have access to. As such they contribute a gendered focus to citizen security. Specialized police facilities also make a significant contribution to good governance because of the ongoing collaboration between the women's movement and NGOs, the police, and in some cases state women's machineries in the areas of service provision and coordination and administration.

Gender mainstreaming in the police can improve the rights of women police on the force and also, through increased transparency and transformed policies and programs, to the general population as well. Examples in the region range from hiring and promotion policies, a diagnostic study that visibilizes sexual harassment against policewomen, and introducing sex-disaggregated statistics. Gender mainstreaming policies and mechanisms can contribute substantially to making a democratic police force more likely to engage in democratic policing. If women's rights are respected on the force – especially the right to live without violence – it is more likely that police will enforce those rights in the community.

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These strengths are found in the relatively small body of literature that currently exists, and so are two important ambiguities. First, there are contradictions between the intended goals of these initiatives and the effects of how they are implemented for women's exercise of their rights. Second, intersectoral participation between the police and the women's movement, as well as other state and non-state actors, both contributes to improved quality and effectiveness while at the same time as it brings to the fore differing/divergent perspectives among and even within the various stakeholders regarding violence against women, citizenship, and the other key issues.

The framework for analyzing these issues is built on four key concepts and the relationship between them: gender, violence against women, governance and citizenship. Gender is considered to be socially constructed, which is to say that gender cannot be conflated with women, or assume that all women (or all men) have the same gender identity (Mohanty 1992). The assignment and selection of gender identities must be seen as a political process. Indeed, it is by studying how specific gender meanings are constructed that we can see how power operates. If we understand gender in this way, gender becomes an analytic category for studying power (Scott 1988) which we can use to analyze how the gender identities made available to us in our daily lives can be linked to gendered symbols that expose how power operates through the state and other "public" spaces. It also provides a framework for examining how particular gendered meanings can be inscribed in apparently neutral acts.

Various conceptual approaches to violence against women are based on the social construction of gender.[2] At the same time, different institutional perspectives on the part of service providers can also be uncovered using a gender analysis (Jubb 2001; Santos 1999). Explanations will be made linking the above elements of the concept of gender with ecological (Ellsberg 2000) and structural gender (Camacho 1996, D'Angelo and Heumann 1999) frameworks so that violence against women violence will be understood not just as "domestic" violence in the sense of spousal violence, but also state-perpetrated violence and sexual violence.

A concept of governance is necessary to understand the contradictions and ambiguities that emerge from the direct and indirect participation of the women's movement and other sectors, including other state sectors and donors. Starting from an understanding of the state as a site of struggle, as found in much recent feminist scholarship (Alvarez et al. 1998, Molyneux 2000), these gendered policing initiatives can be seen as sites of gender struggle between the participating actors. This struggle is not just over making the prevention and sanctioning of violence against women a state obligation, but about defining the boundaries between public and private, the state and civil society (Corrigan and Sayer 1985), and, in particular, the role of the women's movement (Alvarez 1999, Schild 1998).

These initiatives are sites of ongoing struggle among contending world views. As feminist analysts have pointed out in other areas, state involvement in a feminist program can be a double-edged sword because at the same time that it gives a larger profile, acceptance, budget, etc. to the program it also changes the content and objectives to reflect its own interests (Nelson 1996, Ng 1996, Schild 1995). Therefore, the visibility given to violence against women through the WPS is offset by the services provided users, which, as we will see below, do not always place their priority on the defense of and education about women's rights. The same contradiction can be found around gender mainstreaming where gender mainstreaming at its

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[2] Some of these approaches link violence against women to other debates and frameworks, for example, human rights (Rico 1996), security (Policia Nacional 1999), development (Bunch y Carrillo 1990; Morrison y Orlando 1997) or public health (Heise et al. 1994) framework.

root challenges the masculine culture of the force, such as women not being allowed to work in operational positions.

The police is not the only actor facing ambiguities. Women's movements must face possible contradictions between doing advocacy from outside the state while at the same time as participating in coordinated service delivery and even joint administration with the police and other state agencies. This links to recent analyses of the "blurring" between the state and civil society because of the professionalization, "absorption" or even "NGOization" of particular activists and sectors of the women's movement as they become relied upon to design and/or carry out the programs of the women's machineries (Alvarez 1999; Schild 1998). Donors can also be seen as part of this struggle. Though there is little debate on the topic in the literature – probably due to the uneven power relationship between donors and recipients (Hately 1997) – there are some analyses of how donor conditions can shape the focus of women's groups' activities and their gendered meanings (Ford-Smith 1989; Schild 1995). Thus donor funding and technical assistance can also be analyzed in terms of how it shapes the struggle between the state and the women's movement (Jubb 1999).

An important outcome of this struggle between the state and the women's movement is women's citizenship. The struggle has shifted from including women as citizens to the terms of that membership. Even though there are currently gaps in the literature regarding both gender issues in citizen security debates (Bernales 1999; Neild n.d.) and violence against women in citizenship debates (Alvarez et al. 1998; Craske 1999; Molyneux 2000), the above concepts provide some insight into citizenship issues in regards to gendered policing initiatives.

This paper examines key issues regarding specialized police services for violence against women and gender mainstreaming in police forces with the purpose of assessing their contributions to debates on women's citizenship and good governance. It draws mostly on studies done on the following countries: Brazil, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Peru, Haiti, and El Salvador. It seeks to answer two key questions. How are WPS and GMP currently contributing to women's citizenship and governance? How can WPS and GMP be strengthened to improve women's citizenship and governance? It was written as part of the initial phase of a regional research project entitled Women and Policing in Latin America whose goals are to produce comprehensive, comparative documentation and assessment of WPS and gender mainstreaming in Latin America and at the same time to contribute to strengthening these initiatives. It is intended to provide both an overview of current research in the field of WPS and gender mainstreaming as well as contribute to defining an agenda for future research.

These issues include mapping existing models in terms of participation of stakeholders as well as others to identify stakeholders and their perspectives, as well as the services provided and existing research regarding their effects and impact. The context of the emergence shows that for gender mainstreaming, one of the important keys to success is commencing from the inception of the new force and the relatively greater role of donors and technical cooperation for the gender mainstreaming in relation to the WPS where national actors play central roles. Competing perspectives of violence against women reflect various differences, including different sectoral locations as well as different disciplinary approaches. Statistics on violence against women produced by the police have, on the one hand, provided considerable data for understanding how violence occurs and is reported, and on women's position within the force. On the other hand, police statistics also tell the police's perspective on what is violence and whether or not it is a crime. Analyses of specialized procedures of the WPS have found that specialized units have marginalized these initiatives and separated them from gender mainstreaming, meanwhile evaluations of training show that they are more effective if members of the women's movement are involved. This latter insight has not as yet been applied to gender

mainstreaming, which has addressed different issues in different countries. The WPS form a link in the chain of the criminal justice system, in which important changes to legislation and in the police to improve women's access to their rights, have not yet been matched in the courts. Without significant changes in the courts, the benefits of the WPS will be minimal. The ambiguities regarding collaboration of the police and the women's movement, as well as other actors, is, as already raised, one of the key aspects of the initiatives. Funding and technical cooperation, though not often analyzed in this body of literature, have an influence on both defining these initiatives and the relations between the national actors. Finally, an assessment of the impact of these initiatives is difficult at this moment in time for two reasons: one is the lack of clear evidence to explain the causes of increases in reporting, while the other is the lack of consensual indicators across the competing perspectives.

Despite the ever-growing popularity of the WPS and increased interest in gender mainstreaming in the police by both the population and bilateral and multilateral donors, there needs to be more data, analysis, and comparison to provide a comprehensive assessment of these initiatives in Latin America to inform strategies to improve them. In some countries there has been some research done, while in Brazil violence against women from a juridical perspective is its own field of study. Unfortunately there is little knowledge or analysis about the WPS shared between countries. Most research regarding GMP has consisted almost exclusively of diagnostic and other studies done as part of the mainstreaming interventions. There have been few opportunities for horizontal exchange and comparison, but those that have taken place have been successful.[3] Finally, efforts to transform research into action need to be strengthened, such as public policy inputs, advocacy campaigns, and articulating expressed demands made by users. The paper concludes with lessons learned from the literature and ends with recommendations for a future research agenda that will contribute to strengthening these initiatives.

## 1. MAPPING THE MODELS

This section provides a more descriptive overview of women's police stations and gender mainstreaming in the police as the basis for subsequent sections which will consider the issues that arise from these models. What becomes clear regarding the WPS is that there is considerable variation within countries (discussed here in relation to Brazil) and between them. This may be explained by issues that will be developed later, including the lack of coordination within the women's movement (the key stakeholder group within civil society), between the women's movment and the state, and the marginalization of "women's issues" within the police force. Although there is less information and less experience with gender mainstreaming, it also seems to vary. But it seems to have to do more with the relationship between the police force and the donor, because often the women's movement is not invited to be a partner. However, mainstreaming initiatives are very new and there is even less analysis about them in the literature.

## A. Women's Police Stations (WPS)

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[3] There have been some exchanges between countries already that have proven very effective for sharing experiences and comparing analyses among actors. Three examples are: ongoing collaboration between the women's movements of Peru and Ecuador, exchanges among Women's Networks against Violence in Central America, and meetings of high ranking women police officers of Central America and the Dominican Republic.

Specialized women's police stations exist in different forms in several countries, including: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Peru, and Uruguay. The models differ around: who is the target population, what kinds of violence are dealt with, what direct and indirect services are provided, what state and non-state actors are involved and the shared responsibilities among them for both service delivery and decision-making, and finally, how they are funded.

The name of the body often gives an indication of the target population and/or the kinds of violence dealt with. In most of the countries, adult women along with children and adolescents are the target populations. Yet according to testimony received from Colombia, the *Comisarías de la Familia* there only deal with abuse and exploitation of children. In Brazil, one uniformity is that they all attend adult women only. The lack of standardization of procedures and state laws throughout the country is seen in the various names given to these stations: *Delegacias de Defesa da Mulher* (Women's Defense Stations), *Delegacias de Atendimento à Mulher* (Stations for Women's Services), *Delegacias da Mulher* (Women's Stations), as well as services offered.

Many of the WPS deal only with family or domestic violence against women and boy and girl children and adolescents, such as the *Comisarías de la Mujer y la Familia* in Ecuador. In Argentina, Brazil, and Nicaragua, the stations also take complaints of sexual violence. Even in WPS that have a broader field of coverage, the vast majority of cases dealt with are spousal violence. Furthermore, what is considered as family or sexual violence varies somewhat from one country to another, depending on the laws regarding violence and the legal attributions of the WPS. Psychological violence is addressed by the WPS in Costa Rica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Peru. Costa Rica is the only country in the region that recognizes patrimonial violence. Although spousal and other forms of violence against women can have both civil and criminal elements, only the WPS of Ecuador and Peru address both. In Peru there is a variety of specialized units, depending in part on the rank of the chief. Some can take on major crimes, while others only deal with misdemeanors (Tamayo et al. 1996)

Direct services to users are often provided by the police in conjunction with other state and non-governmental actors. Police services usually include taking declarations, investigations, and mediation agreements between a complainant and her aggressor. Most of the work by WPS officers – exclusively women in every country – is carried out at the WPS itself. Although in Nicaragua the *Comisaría de la Mujer y la Niñez* does have the mandate to do investigations, in practice on site investigations are never done in cases of spousal abuse. The Nicaraguan WPS officers can also make arrests, but they are almost always accompanied by one or more men officers.

There are two kinds of services offered by the WPS: direct to individual users, and indirect services to the community. Most WPS offer direct "multi-disciplinary services" to users which include gynecological services, forensic medical and/or psychological exam, psychological counseling, and legal representation. They are usually provided by women's NGOs and there is no cost to the user. Reference and counter-reference systems, the goals and levels of services are not spelled out in the literature. In Ecuador and Peru, these services are offered at the WPS by one NGO with a signed contract. In Nicaragua, there are civilian social workers hired first by the state women's machinery, then by the police, working in the police facility and users who press charges get transfers for services at one of a number of NGOs in each locality that provide direct services. The Costa Rican *Delegación de la Mujer*, when first formed ten years ago, had a more extensive mandate. Today it operates exclusively as an orientation service with no police participation (Carcedo 2000). Indirect services include public awareness and education campaigns, which are carried out by the NGOs, often in coordination with the WPS police. In

addition and separate to the WPS, the Ecuadorian police also has an *Oficina de defensa de los derechos de la mujer* (ODMU) made up exclusively of police officers whose name and functions have changed with the creation of the WPS. In some localities they support the services of the WPS, however the literature is unclear in distinguishing them.

Centres are contracted to provide services complementary to the police's field of action. In Ecuador and Nicaragua (during the first phase from 1993-1998), those contracts were signed with the state women's machinery. In Peru, the NGO works directly with the police and in the second phase in Nicaragua they are contracted by an independent administrating firm. Largely because of this funding role, the state women's machinery in Ecuador (*Consejo Nacional de las Mujeres,* CONAMU) and Nicaragua (*Instituto* Nicaragüense *de la Mujer,* INIM) played a leadership role in the administration and inter-agency coordination of the WPS. In Nicaragua, commissions exist at the national and local levels to coordinate services and administer project funds where the police and all centres linked to the WPS through either direct or indirect services participate. Only in Ecuador is the head of the WPS a civilian. In general the literature addresses services only, with little detail on coordinations between independent services, or whether and to what regard there is joint administration, oversight and monitoring.

Two studies published in 2001 partially made up for the lack of information regarding women's police stations in Brazil. They are: the National Research Study on the Functioning of Police Stations Specialized in Attending to Women, sponsored by the National Women's Rights Council and a comparative study regarding women's police stations in four states in the Brazilian Northeast region. The first study revealed two interesting aspects regarding obstacles to carrying out a national study. First, WPS are police organs and are linked to the state civil police. Their creation, attributions, installations, and resources are determined by state governments through state laws or decrees, giving rise to some differences in their functioning. A second aspect, stemming from the first, is the lack of standardization of procedures for making complaints. Based on the bibliography consulted, it was possible to identify at least three models of these stations.

One is a model that favors bureaucratic services – police documentation of complaints and initiation of corresponding judicial processes. This applies, for example, to the women's police stations in the state of São Paulo. Observation of day-to-day activity in these stations enables one to affirm that policewomen in those stations fulfill the role of judiciary police, that is they fill out police reports and exercise the necessary bureaucratic foresight to later forward complaints to the judiciary. [4]

Two is a model that mixes police activity with mediation initiatives. This applies to WPS in Rio de Janeiro. Conflict mediation activities, reported by Soares (1996), Muniz (1996), and Brandão (1998) show how policewomen take on the role of mediators, calling on aggressors to "converse", and only resorting to judicial channels as a last resort. In these cases, policewomen carry out an activity that extrapolates judicial activity because mediation and conflict resolution are attributes of the judiciary. Regarding this activity, the national study verified that there is a difference between attributions stipulated by law and daily practice in the WPS. The conciliation and mediation activities were defined in this study as non-police activities and were practiced in 42.7% of the stations. These data enable us to affirm that this model could be generalized into other contexts.

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[4] There are very few studies analyzing the functioning of DDMs in São Paulo. We can cite SEADE (1987), Izumino (1998), Nelson (1996), Santos (1999 and 2001) and Vargas (2001), although this last work is exclusively dedicated to analyzing sexual crimes.

Three is a model that combines police attention with psychological-social attention described by Amaral (2001) in a study about women's police stations in four states of the Northeast region of the Brazil. The description offered by each state regarding the form of services – the professionals involved, procedures, channels, etc – reveals a concern for listening to women and giving them a chance to think about the problem. Here, channeling the problem towards the judiciary seems to be one possibility, but not the only one.

Funding for the WPS comes from a variety of sources. In all cases, the policing part of the budget is covered mostly by the police itself. The multi-disciplinary services are funded in Nicaragua through bilateral aid between several European governments and their counterpart (INIM in the first phase, the National Police and a private administration firm in the second). In Ecuador funding comes from CONAMU while multilateral (UN system) and bilateral funds have funded related programs (such as training, education campaigns, and inter-sectoral negotiations) among various state and non-state agencies (Reyes y Camacho 2001).

## B. Gender Mainstreaming in the Police

Few police forces in Latin America – or elsewhere – have undertaken to mainstream gender within their institution. Nicaragua is the country with the most experience, though the National Civilian Police (PNC) of El Salvador and the National Police of Haiti (PNH), among others, have also taken steps towards gender mainstreaming. Mainstreaming programs have included a number of elements. Targetted recruitment of women is a central part of these initiatives. In El Salvador prior to the Peace Accords, police were exclusively men, but following the founding of the PNC women were also included in recruitment efforts and now make up 6% of the total force (though 13% of the highest ranking officers) (Rivera 2000). Although in Nicaragua women always constituted a relatively large proportion of the National Police since it was founded in 1979, reaching a high of 35% during the 1980s (Cabrera et al. 1999). In the late 1990s, specialized recruitment has begun to taken place. Women now make up 19% of the force. Internal employment equity policies exist in Nicaragua regarding promotions and training and El Salvador has carried out a diagnostic study to provide the basis for its employment equity policy. As yet no internal control mechanisms or specific policies exist in any of the countries regarding pay equity or other employment equity issues such as sexual harassment, flexible hours, or day care.

Mainstreaming in Nicaragua has gone beyond initiatives for improving individual women's on-the-job equity. It has a Consultative Council on Gender with women elected representatives (whose head is the national chief of police), policies on citizen security with a gender perspective, gender training for the entire existing force and all new recruits, and has "the gender perspective" as one of its nine guiding principles.

Multilateral and bilateral cooperation have played key roles in mainstreaming gender within the police. The agencies include: German Technical Cooperation (GTZ – in Nicaragua), the European Union (in El Salvador), and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (in Haiti). UN agencies made less of a commitment to mainstreaming until the Brahmini report. Cooperation has included not only financial assistance, but also technical support for the design and implementation of policies and programs.

## 2. CONTEXTS OF EMERGENCE OF THESE INITIATIVES IN THE POLICE

All of these initiatives have occurred within national and international contexts of transitions from authoritarian rule, a growing women's movement, and increased attention to various forms of violence against women. In each case the timing, actors and elements have been somewhat different. Despite the differences, there are certain general points that can be made. One is the need for commitment from a high-ranking police officer(s). Another is sustained political mobilization by the national or local women's movement, which in the case of somewhat older democracies, includes direct lobbying of the police. International actors may or may not be directly involved through providing financial or technical assistance, but international attention to women's rights provides at least a political, legal or discursive context for the national actors. State women's machineries have been involved in various ways in these initiatives. This section will examine these factors for a few specific countries.

In the 1980s a transformation occurred in Brazilian society's understanding of violence against women, above all in the domestic setting. Since then this problem has acquired visibility. Defined as the main banner of feminist demands in the 1980s (Costa 1998), violence against women, especially so-called crimes of passion, had an important unifying role for the women's movement in Brazil. Women carried out struggles for better living conditions, greater women's participation in the labor market and the political scene, struggles to bring an end to the military dictatorship, and to bring about political re-democratization of society. To do that, women organized in various groups linked to the church, political parties, unions, and autonomous organizations. They began to create space to discuss the situation of oppression and discrimination that they experienced in society. The first direct election for state governor occurred in 1982, following almost twenty years of military regime. An opposition party candidate was elected in São Paulo, a progressive committed to human rights. Women's groups affiliated with the feminist movement and opposition activists saw this government as offering a possibility to establish a dialogue with the State, to denounce women's status, and to propose measures that could alter the disrespect women were facing. The 1985 creation of women's police stations to attend to victims of physical and sexual violence had a major political impact in this area. The goal was to overcome existing problems in the regular police stations, through providing women with an environment of respect that would encourage complaints and their judicial outcome, as well as offering services that would not only penalize violence against women, but also give them juridical-social and psychological support. With the support of the police chief (Nelson 1996), a new specialty within the police was established.

In Ecuador, the first WPS were set up in Guayaquil and four other cities in 1994 thanks to a women's movement leader who took advantage of her personal relationship with the then-Government Minister to lobby for their establishment. A ministerial agreement paved the way for establishing the first five WPS as a pilot project, co-administered by the police and one women's NGO. The national women's machinery (then called DINAMU or *Dirección Nacional de la Mujer*) was not initially involved (Reyes and Camacho, 2001). In a separate move to gain the support of the women's movement, the post-Bucharam interim government raised the rank, functions and attributes of the agency and changed its name to CONAMU (*Consejo Nacional de las Mujeres*) – a more powerful government body with policy-making capacities than its predecessor. CONAMU is now a key player in the administration of the Ecuadorian WPS.

Haitian and Salvadoran models of gender mainstreaming have two very different contexts. In El Salvador, often cited as a best practice of democratizing the police force, significant incorporation of the guerrillas into the police force as a result of the peace accords has already occurred, which has included the incorporation of more women. In Haiti, police de-militarization has been much more difficult. Moreover, violence against women became used as a political tool during military rule from 1991 to 1993. The Haitian women's movement has

engaged in public campaigns and mobilizing to raise the profile of violence against women and, in particular, rape as a crime of war in protest against the US position which dismissed the accusations (Fuller). These strategies have been chosen over direct lobbying of police given the general political context. European Union funding had a minimal focus on gender. It seems there is a lack of commitment on the part of the police and no rapprochement (or distrust) between the police and the women's movement which prevents a mainstreaming package – including WPS – from taking root.

In Nicaragua, the first WPS was set up to commemorate the international day to end violence against women on November 25, 1993. The pilot project, funded by Holland, was the result of more than a year of negotiations between the women's movement, the police and the state women's machinery (INIM). Spousal, family and sexual violence first gained visibility during the 1980s due to the consciousness raising, legal and other strategies taken on by the Sandinista and independent women's movements. A pre-cursor to the WPS during the Sandinista revolution (1980s) was the Women's Legal Office (OLM) set up by AMNLAE, the national women's organization, which provided lawyers and psychologists (but not police) to accompany women in the judicial process or do mediations. After the electoral defeat of the Sandinista government in 1990 the founder of the OLM, along with other women's movement leaders, initiated the idea of setting up a WPS. Meanwhile in a separate initiative, a high-ranking woman police officer began to disaggregate crime statistics by gender and both welcomed and spearheaded the WPS within the police. Because the police refused to administer funds other than those allocated through the national budget, the INIM was brought in to be the counterpart and administrator of the project funds. The roles of the national actors are inter-dependent, however ideological and other differences have led each national actor to make competing claims as "owners" of the WPS (Jubb 1999).

## 3. COMPETING PERSPECTIVES ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

From relative obscurity and silence just twenty years ago, upholding women's right to live without violence has gained acceptance as a critical development issue. The Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women (CEDAW), passed by the UN General Assembly in 1979 does not make explicit reference to violence against women. Yet it is a key plank in the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference of Women held in Beijing in 1995. Although violence against women is gradually becoming recognized, there exist several different perspectives on violence against women. Some are theoretical, including the causes and relevance, what acts are considered as violence, as well as what should be done about it and by whom. Others are practical, for example what is prevention, what are the objectives of the WPS. Still other differences are based on disciplinary specializations – for example a public heath vs. a criminal justice perspective.

Analysis of violence against women has a long history in Brazil. The very first studies using police records in the mid 1980s emphasize feminine victimization, placing women in the role of suffering violence without having mechanisms to overcome this situation. In these studies, the causes of violence don't reside in relations between men and women, but are external factors such as poverty, alcoholism, and a patriarchal structure of arrangements between sexes in society (Izumino 1998). In the 1990s, studies on violence against women were marked by introduction of gender as a category of analysis. Relations between the sexes were then understood as socially constructed, and therefore, historically defined and open to transformation. Violence against women stopped being viewed as a natural element in the relation of domination between men and women. Indeed it was seen as the result of power relations that structure relations between people in their daily lives, and that develop in multiple

directions, establishing different possibilities for domination and submission. A change in approach began to take place and feminine talk came to be valued. Women ceased to be viewed simply as passive victims of events. The works of Joan Scott (1988), Elisabeth Souza Lobo (1991), and Helleith Saffioti (1992) can be singled out as those that most influenced this new line of study.

Some feminist approaches seek a single explanation of violence against women: men's structural dominance over women (Camacho 1996; D'Angelo and Heumann 1999). These differ from non-feminist approaches that ignore the specificity of gender-based violence, looking instead to socio-economic issues to explain why it seems that poor men are more violent than rich men. Another feminist perspective uses the ecological model (Ellsberg 2000; Heise 1998). Its multicausal focus allows an explanation of why it is that any woman can potentially be affected, but not all men are violent.

Like many feminist debates, viewpoints on violence against women can be distinguished depending on whether they call for a separate or integrated approach to violence against women. Those who insist on a singular explanation, such as D'Angelo and Heumann (1999), argue that integrated approaches, such as those that address violence against women from the angle of citizen security, public health, or economic costs for development, ignore issues of power and strip women of being subjects. Thus, attempts to link social and "domestic" violence (Buvinic et al. 1998) or highlight the economic costs of violence (Morrison and Orlando 1998) are dismissed as being instrumentalist. They call for the need to put women front and centre in analyses and responses that give women the right to make their own choices, including over their sexuality (D'Angelo and Heumann 1999). It is vital to insist that women be the subjects of policies and to reframe issues away from how to be a better wife and mother towards women's inalienable rights over their bodies. The underlying assumption of the feminist separatist position can easily be used as an excuse to sideline gendered approaches to policing by arguing that it is a separate section. These approaches, which are very common in the areas of citizen security and governance, confuse what they narrowly define as "women's issues" (Neild, ICCHRD) with a gender analysis that offers a new perspective of how power operates in symbolically or in seemingly gender-neutral situations (Scott 1988). Furthermore, this division is somewhat of a false dichotomy: even gender-based violence does not affect all women the same way nor do women have the same possibilities to respond.

Perspectives on violence against women also differ in terms of what is considered to be violence against women. Overwhelmingly, the literature on violence against women, no matter what the perspective or field of study, addresses spousal abuse of women in heterosexual relationships. This also reflects the statistics of the WPS, which either focus exclusively on spousal abuse or it is the majority of complaints filed (as we will see below). This may well be the most prevalent form of violence against adult women and, the growing attention to VAW has allowed for it to become more visible. However, not all conceptions of spousal violence – whether in policies, laws, or WPS – are the same: most focus on physical abuse only, with secondary attention to psychological abuse. Patrimonial violence (i.e. withholding or controlling the family's economic resources) is only recognized by law in Costa Rica, while sexual violence such as forced marital sex is usually considered a right/obligation either explicitly (culture) or by omission (law). Although spousal abuse is the most prevalent form of violence against women, exclusive focus on spousal abuse as "domestic violence" can have the unintended outcome of being simultaneously highlighted and sidelined, or placed on the public agenda only to be re-privatized (Jubb 2001). This makes it easier to equate all forms of violence against women with spousal abuse, ignoring "public" experiences of violence, either individual forms of violence (sexual harassment), or structural violence perpetrated by the state (e.g. political rape in Haiti or refugee and displaced women in El Salvador and Guatemala).

Perspectives on prevention, as well as psychological violence, can differ by sectors. Prevention for the police is usually considered a police intervention to prevent a more serious crime. Prevention may mean throwing an aggressor in jail, doing an out-of-court settlement, or even having a "chat" with him. Prevention for the women's movement is a long-term process, which would include actions such as education campaigns or training programs to raise women's self-esteem. For the Nicaraguan women's movement, recognition of psychological violence is one of the hallmarks of the family violence law, however, the police in Nicaragua do not recognize it in practice. They have not been trained to detect it and there are very few cases tried for psychological injuries.

There also exist a variety of opinions on what responses are to be made to end or prevent violence against women and uphold women's rights to live without violence and who should provide it. One set of approaches relates to disciplinary perspective. A psychologist and a lawyer do not always share the same perspective. In legal terms, a successful case would see a guilty verdict, whereas in psychological terms success can be measured through improved self-esteem and personal autonomy, and pressing charges does not necessarily contribute to achieving this.

How and whether to include men is another issue for debate. Some argue they should be included as allies in solving the problem of women's insecurity (Ellsberg and Clavel 2001; Camacho 1998). Reticence to working with men because it takes funding away from working with women or because women are left passive while men are the change agents also exists. Yet another position argues that by not working with men, violence is assumed to be something natural in men, while all the responsibility for change – and therefore stopping violence – is placed on women (D'Angelo and Heumann 1999).

Collaboration between the state and the women's movement has also generated considerable debate, with different perspectives emerging at depending on the context, the particular moment in time, and the theoretical perspective. The growth of the contemporary women's movement is inextricable from processes of militarization and democratization, which may help to explain a large part of the women's movement looking to get a "foothold" in the newly democratized state in the 1980s and early 1990s (Alvarez 1990). In the mid to late 1990s a debate emerged as to whether the women's movement should professionalize itself (in the form of individuals or groups being contracted by state women's machineries) or should only operate in opposition to it. However, collaborating with the police as a vestige/former guarantor of state security raises far more doubts and contradictions. Many authors point to the contradictions of states taking positive action to prevent or sanction violence against women while at the same time perpetrating violence or reproducing gendered myths about the public-private split and where women are located within them (Jubb 2001; Nelson 1997).[5] The issues of competing perspectives are also relevant to the inter-sectoral National Plans against Violence that many Latin American countries now have. In Nicaragua, the women's movement fought for a broad definition of violence against women, including prostitution and labour law violations (for example, in the maquilas), but this was rejected by the state partners who insisted on including "domestic" violence only.

A gender focus on women's rights provides a more critical perspective on the police. The police should not be seen as a simple facilitator of justice or a service provider, but how it may also perpetrate violence either directly (rape, revictimizing complainants), by omission (ignoring entire cases, ignoring potential evidence), or structurally (not attending cases in certain areas, or

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[5] Thompson (1997) examines the contradictions of Chinese state actions around the NGO women's conference in Huarou in 1995.

treating women differently depending on their class and race). This is particularly relevant for post-transition forces. It is also the experience of women from marginal communities in Brazil who are reluctant to go to the WPS to look for protection from their abusive partners because the police are likely to arrest them on drug charges.

## 4. USERS' IDENTITIES AND STATISTICS ON PREVALENCE AND SERVICES FOR VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Before considering what police statistics tell us about violence and the profile of WPS users, information systems and data analysis need to be studied in their own right for the gaps and biases they bring to the statistics themselves. Undoubtedly the WPS have been vital in providing access to information about violence against women. But this information cannot be assumed to be neutral: it is biased by how violence is understood in the laws and perceptions of violence by officers who do the recording, as well as the limits to producing statistics, analyzing them, and using them to develop public policy.

### A. Record-Keeping and Data Analysis

The contributions of the WPS to analyses of violence against women are – like so many other things – very mixed. On the one hand, some researchers point to the WPS as a boon for analysis of violence against women because police records have provided access to data that was either not being collected at all, or not as systematically in terms of either territorial coverage or key factors such as age, sex, relationship and recidivism of victim and assailant (OPS 1999; Reyes and Camacho 2001).

On the other hand, there are limits to police records. One of them relates to the field of action of the WPS: they only collect statistics on the crimes they prosecute, therefore WPS that only address spousal and family violence would not have statistics on sexual violence or other forms of violence. In some cases the WPS only deal with major crimes, and some only with misdemeanors. Under-collection of data and lack of analysis is a generalized problem, underlined in analyses of the Nicaraguan, Ecuadorian, and Brazilian WPS due to lack of under-funding and lack of training (Ellsberg and Claramunt 1996; Reyes and Camacho, 2001). Another problem with police records is that the police are not trained to detect various forms of violence, so the data generated may not reflect the situation of the users (Loreto Biehl 2001).

Crime statistics can also be analyzed in terms of the perceptions they create about violence against women. Though police records seemingly serve to visibilize violence against women, they are often limited to spousal violence only. Therefore other forms of violence, such as sexual violence or violations of women's rights by the state are not included. Meanwhile in Nicaragua, many forms of family violence are classified as misdemeanors and even though individual WPS in Nicaragua keep records on crimes and misdemeanors, only crimes are recorded in official police statistics, while even misdemeanors calculated by the National Department of Comisarías are not classified clearly according to the family violence law. Severe psychological injuries which can be classified a crime are usually ignored by the WPS and their records (Jubb 2001). Given that the vast majority of complaints do not get sent to trial and that the specialized records kept by the Nicaraguan WPS cannot be integrated into the global system, traditional information systems of the police can be seen as reproducing the invisibility of violence against women.

Around 70% of complaints in Brazilian WPS involve spousal violence. In many cases, however, the police fail to clarify matters regarding police and juridical procedures, and also in

how they counsel people regarding claims for spousal separation, family support, etc. Santos (1999) shows that the position of policewomen in regard to the women's movement – more distant or closer – determines the way in which a complaint about a crime against a woman would be received and registered by police. What must be highlighted is the fact that this is a matter not of institutional, but of individual approach. Policewomen do not necessarily have to be aligned with the feminist movement, but they should have awareness training regarding the condition of women in Brazilian society. Recalling the three existing models in Brazil, those who seek mediation and conciliation lack adequate studies regarding incorporating gender as an analytic category in their functioning. Given that the model followed has an exclusive police perspective, the influence of individual discretion in registering complaints is quite evident.

Studies have shown that the vast majority of women do not go the police when they are living violence. Indeed, research in various countries points to the fact that the vast majority of women never seek institutionalized help for violence. A Nicaraguan study shows that 80% of women who suffered spousal abuse did not seek outside help: 14% from the police, about 5% from a women's centre and about 1% from a public health clinic (Ellsberg et al., 1998). In the popular neighbourhoods of Quito, only 7% of the women interviewed were found to have told someone outside the nuclear family and none of them went to the authorities to register a complaint (Camacho 1996). Some studies have shown that women are more likely to look for specialized services from state or non-governmental providers, than to go to the (regular) police. A Nicaraguan study done by the Women's Network against Violence found that reportings in twelve of their affiliated, alternative centres plus two WPS were 50% higher than national police records (Larrain 1997). A Chilean study comparing reportings at specialized information centres (CEDIM) recently established by SERNAM, the state women's machinery, with reportings at regular police stations and health services (public hospitals and clinics) found that 65% of women who went to the CEDIM and acknowledged that they lived violence did not go to either the police or health services.

Furthermore, police statistics only calculate complaints registered, and do not track the outcome of those complaints. Research has shown that the vast majority of complaints never go to trial (CENIDH 1995; Soares 2001; Tamayo 1998). A 1994-95 study in Nicaragua found that over a three-month period, of 450 cases, only 12.2% were sent to court. Of the remainder, 34.7% were resolved in the WPS through mediation or closed at various stages of the police investigation because the complainant did not continue with the procedures (CENIDH 1995, 27). This analysis is made even more difficult to do because of the lack of national registries for tracing charges from the police through the courts (Ellsberg and Clavel 2001).

Unfortunately, these statistics are still underutilized in the formulation of public policies to combat, sanction, and reduce violence against women. Even though disaggregated statistics led to the creation of the WPS in Nicaragua, today analyses of statistics, for example a study on out-of-court settlements by the National Department of the WPS and a women's organization (Torres et al. 2000) is an exception. In Brazil, this suggests a schism between those who produce the statistics who have an academic interest in the issue and those who are practioners in the diverse fields related to penalizing violence against women, which include women's groups, rights activists, legislators, and governors.

Finally, existing police records are insufficient for analyzing the dynamics of violence as they are records of complaints and not prevalence of violence. Although all WPS have shown ongoing increases in reportings, the absence of base-line studies makes it impossible to draw conclusions about whether the incidence or prevalence of violence is increasing or decreasing (Larrain 1997; Reyes and Camacho 2001). Most complaints of crimes refer to physical attacks (battering) and threats. The number of cases has increased in recent years. However, it is not

possible to determine if this growth is due to a real increase in violence against women, or to an increase in complaints stimulated by campaigns and by recognition that women's police stations are a privileged place to make such complaints. It is likely that this growth does not have a single cause. What can be affirmed is that women's police stations give visibility to the problem. So today it is possible to know about these complaints and to trace their profile. But this has severe implications for analyzing whether the WPS are contributing to ending or preventing violence, and, thus, the effectiveness of the WPS.

## B. Profiles of Women Survivors

A recent study of violence against women in Ecuador (Reyes and Camacho 2001) reported statistics from an evaluation and an impact study of the WPS based on a total of 105,345 complaints made to the WPS in five cities between 1995 and 1998. Over 97% of complaints were made by adult women and girl children. The majority of women (75.3%) were between the ages of 20 and 39 years of age, 87.6% were from the city. The ethnic composition was 85.3% mestizo, 7.8% indigenous, and 6.2% black. These statistics are, generally speaking, reflective of the population distribution, and take into consideration varying concentrations of ethnicities in different cities. Two thirds (67.3%) of women work in the informal sector and are very poor and 62.7% had not completed secondary school. The amount of women who till lived with or were married to their abusive partners was 76.75%. Though few details are given about abusers, 67.3% are also employed in the informal sector. These women report that violence usually (38%) occurs weekly. Only 10.05% have made complaints based on psychological violence, 94.09% reported psychological violence and 71.55% complained about physical violence. About half (49.6%) of women had experienced both psychological and physical violence. Almost one third of the women interviewed (31.4%) had been forced to have sex with their partner, though only 15.7% of complaints were made because of sexual assault.

In Nicaragua, data available from the WPS was supplemented with primary interviews to provide a partial analysis of WPS users who sign extra-judicial arrangements (Torres et al. 2000). Other than that, the data from the WPS  is not included in the annual general police statistics, nor is the WPS data disaggregated by sex and race of victim and assailant. So far, nation-wide studies of the WPS reports have not been done. The study of signed extrajudicial arrangements (out of court settlements) was carried out in six WPS between 1998 and 1999 (Torres et al. 2000). Ninety-two percent of the victims are women and 78 percent are between the ages of 15 and 40. Almost half (45%) of the women are either married or live in a common-law relationship. The majority of the women are homemakers (45%) and domestic employees are 20%. During this period 71% are either living with their current partner or separated. The statistics on abusers show that 82% are men. Of them, 69% live alone, while another 31% live with their partner. Almost half (49%) of abusers are between the ages of 11 and 30. A report of complaints made to a local WPS during a five-month period in 1995 found that 54% of rapes happens in the victim's home and that in 12.5% of cases the abuser was related to the victim. Most rapes happen on Fridays and Sundays. The victims are almost exclusively (99.9%) women, of whom 30% are girls under 15. The abusers are all adults and all have a primary eduation, 47% are unemployed.

The Brazilian WPS gave way to a vital innovation regarding the production of statistics about violence against women, because official police statistics did not offer data by sex of the persons involved or the relationship between the victim and the  perpretrator.[6] The first study

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[6] This problem is ongoing despite recommendations of various conventions and programs to confront violence in Brazilian society: Convenção de Belém do Pará (1994), Programa Nacional de Direitos Humanos (1996), Plano Estadual de Direitos Humanos (1998), Programa Nacional de Segurança Pública (2000), among others.

since the creation of the WPS in São Paulo revealed that 71.3% of cases involved married couples (SEADE, 1987). In Florianópolis (Camargo, 1992), an analysis of 2000 complaints reported in the women's police stations revealed that 74.1% involved couples. In the state of Rio de Janeiro in 1989, 47% of complaints in the Baixada Fluminense WPS were perpetrated by (ex)husbands, (ex)companions, or (ex)lovers (FIOCRUZ, 1991). In the same state in 1992 (Soares, 1996), what stands out is that 74.5% of denounced crimes were committed by spouses. A recent study carried out in the Northeast region of the country (Amaral, 2001), not only corroborates this profile of violence in the women's police stations, but also demonstrates that despite all the campaigns and measures, violence against women continues to present the same characteristics. Complaints involving husbands/companions, ex-husbands/ex-companions, lovers/ex-lovers represent: 57.5% of the total in Natal, 73.9% in João Pessoa, 87% in Fortaleza, and 79.5% in Salvador. In general, most attacks occur in the home, mainly at night and on weekends. These studies also provide a profile of the women who use the WPS in Brazil, although it is somewhat fragmented in time and space (SEADE, 1987; Camargo et al., 1992; Soares, 1996; Izumino, 1998; Amaral, 2001). In general, it can be said that victims are young women (between 19 and 34 years), with low levels of schooling and professional qualifications. When working for pay they are found in the marketing sector and in cleaning services. Many are homemakers, but report that they do some kind of activity in the informal labor market. Amaral (2001) points to the high presence of homemakers among victims who attend WPS in the Northeast.

Despite there being very few studies regarding color/race or class, some important findings have emerged from Brazilian studies, including conclusions which challenge the stereotype. SEADE (1987) makes a comparison between police data and population figures, concluding that the percentage of complaints involving Blacks and Mulattos is higher than their confirmed portion in the overall population. The people involved belong to less economically privileged classes, reinforcing the stereotype that domestic violence is attributable to poverty and ignorance. Their aggressors are men ranging in age from 25 to 45 years, with low levels of education and professional qualifications. These contexts evidence a clear class profile about the users of WPS services. Recent studies (Izumino, 1998; Pimentel, 1998) have emphasized two reasons for the predominance of popular classes among users of women's police stations which call into question the stereotype. First, there is a historical situation that places these sectors under greater control and vigilance from police and judicial organs, such that even minor offenses take on great expression in the context of urban crime. Second, when considering the publicity given to violence against women in the private sphere, one should note that more privileged sectors of the population can rely on agents and services that enable them to find a more "private" form of conflict negotiation and resolution. When faced with conflicts, they do not have to go down the police-judicial route. Instead, they can resort to private lawyers, therapists, and doctors. In other words, domestic violence is not the result of poverty. The publicity surrounding it results from a lack of rights, among them the right to access to specialized services for problems of this nature. This is the lack that is due to poverty.

## 5. POLICE SERVICES: SPECIALIZED TRAINING AND PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Though specialized WPS are one of the hallmarks of Latin American state responses to violence against women, surprisingly, the development, use, and effectiveness of specialized training and procedures used by the WPS have received substantial criticism. Surmising from the studies, assumptions of the separatist approach and even gender essentialism are evident. For example, these stations are kept separate from the rest of the police and run differently; there is little attention paid to developing specialized procedures; and officers may not have any specialized training. It seems that modifications of previous procedures have occurred in

practice, rather than the formal development, approval and application of new procedures and policies that take into consideration the gender dynamics of violence against women so as to ensure women's citizen security.

Separatist assumptions coupled with gender essentialism are evident in the models designed. They were seen as separate, specialized units where women would be treated differently than in the regular station. Privacy, a separate entrance, and all women officers are pivotal aspects of the WPS. There exists considerable debate as to whether having all women officers is a crucial difference. Some argue that women users will feel more comfortable talking to a woman officer, especially members of the women's movement (Lonsway 2001; Reyes y Camacho 2001), whereas others argue that the attitude of the officer is more relevant than his or her gender (ICCLR 1999). Jubb (2001) finds equally mixed views within the Nicaraguan police, where WPS officers tend to take the former view and superior officers (who are likely more versed in gender mainstreaming) take the latter. When the WPS are closed on weekends and weeknights, women are either told to wait until the WPS is open, or be seen by a male officer.

The consensus of the literature is that the most prevalent procedure that WPS police have adapted for use is out-of-court settlements. At the same time, these are highly questioned because they place the couple's reconciliation over women's rights. The settlements take the form of formal or informal agreements between spouses mediated by a police officer in several countries and, in Peru, a legal advisor (CENIDH 1995; Jubb 2001; Nelson 1996; Policía Nacional 2000; Reyes 1995; Tamayo 1999; Tamayo et al. 1996). These procedures are applied to minor acts of violence or cases of domestic and other "disputes." The victim and perpetrator meet with an officer and explain their situation. The officer then steers them towards an agreement that both parties sign. In Nicaragua both agree to neither offend nor insult one other and commit to being mutually respectful. Nicaraguan police and users often see the agreements as positive because they provide quick, effective, and low-cost access to justice. A crucial aspect of these agreements for many users is that her partner will not get sent to jail so he will still be able to provide for his family (Jubb 2001; Torres et al. 2000).

Women's movements in Nicaragua and elsewhere have rejected these agreements because they preclude women's access to justice and ignore a human rights violation, thereby permitting impunity (Tamayo 1999). They take this view because both parties sign the agreements, so, in effect, women are equally blamed. Furthermore, these agreements are used instead of – not as a shortcut to – going through the judicial system to find justice. Women's groups argue that cases should be sent to court instead for sentencing and punishment according to domestic violence laws. Police respond by arguing that women request these agreements (Jubb 2001). A Nicaraguan study found that these agreements are sometimes done in more serious cases of violence, including death threats and serious physical injuries (Torres et al. 2000). It should be pointed out that the women's movement can be divided on this point. In Brazil, for example, feminist intellectuals argue that charges should always be laid, meanwhile popular organizations look to accompany women along based on their own terms.

These mediated settlements have a number of important elements that highlight the work of police officers and the relationship between WPS officers and users. One of these aspects is negotiation. A considerable portion of WPS officers' work consists of talking with women and convincing them to press charges. When the users refuse, a complex dynamic of negotiation occurs in which, in Brazil, poor, migrant black users have to convince the officer take on their case (Nelson 1996). When users choose to do an agreement in the WPS instead of going to court, they are calling on the police to act as a higher authority to that of their partners to reach a new power balance with her partner (Rifiotis 2001). Jubb (2001) argues that there is an important difference between the women who look to the police for support at a critical

moment in their relationship that they themselves are trying to resolve, as opposed to the officers who seek to impose their authority on both the woman who comes for support as well as her abusive partner. Some argue that this dynamic leads officers to disrespect women users (Luna Tobar 1995).

A contradiction emerges over WPS officers listening to women complainants and convincing them to press charges. Part of the reason for having all women officers was the assumption that they would be gentler with women users than men and be better listeners. Throughout the region, research points out that the police do not provide adequate orientation to users about the services available through the WPS and elsewhere, about violence against women, and police procedures at the WPS (Jubb 2001, Nelson 1996, and Tamayo et al. 1996). Indeed some police, particularly in Brazil, reject this "social work" function because they feel that they are not doing "real" police work (Jubb 2001; Rifiotis 2001). And yet best practices guidelines highlight that active listening and carefully explaining to users their rights is one of the most effective measures police and other services can provide (Ellsberg and Clavel 2001; ICCLR 1999). Not only do these procedures fit with the citizen security prioritization of prevention and creating a culture for a rule of law (Backhaus 1999), but police use the settlements without making any calculation of risk to the women users.

The WPS have been resoundingly criticized for not doing sufficient investigations. In Nicaragua only complaints of sexual violence get investigated by the WPS police beyond taking declarations and including the forensic medicine report. In part this is due to the lack of resources and dropped charges. Nelson (1996) found that only 30% of cases get investigated in Brazil. This has led one researcher to question not only the effectiveness of the WPS, but whether they should exist at all (Vargas 2001).

In sharp contrast to this de facto application of standard police procedures in the WPS, concrete guidelines do exist for making violence against women visible as a crime. These guidelines are based on a careful analysis of risk factors for women and research regarding profiles of violence against women, for example when crimes are committed or the fact that women eventually do leave abusive relationships (Ellsberg 2000; ICCLR 1999). The Resource Manual for the Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (ICCLR 1999) points to several practices around consistent and prompt enforcement. One model strategy is always make an investigation and another is to make an arrest whenever an offence occurs, regardless of whether the police have the victim's consent or whether injuries resulted. Where women's safety is the top priority, some jurisdictions have ensured that the assailant be removed from the home immediately. In all these examples, consistency of application is the key to changing attitudes.

Research findings show that training of WPS officers is a key factor for delivering effective service to ensure women's rights. In some cases, the officers first trained when the WPS were originally set up are those with the most sensitivity towards the users (Nelson 1996; Reyes y Camacho 2001). In Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Peru police officers get training in gender awareness and violence against women, often by the NGOs who provide direct services (Reyes and Camacho 2001, Jubb 2001, Tamayo et al. 1996). All of the studies point to the need for this training to be provided by the women's movement – from the perspective of women's rights – in order for it to be effective. Especially, for example, to understand why women stay for so long in abusive relationships. A critical element for effective training is linking it to research findings (Camacho 1996) as well as using interactive methodologies and doing follow-up over an extended period of time.

Training is one of the weakest points of women's police stations in Brazil. The original political project envisioned that police working in the WPS should go through a training program to enable them to approach the problem from a gender perspective. In the first year, training occurred under the supervision of the CECF (State Council of the Feminine Condition). Over time and through all the changes that took place on the political level (changes that, as Nelson (1996) emphasizes, were reflected in the functioning of the WPS), the concern for police training was sidelined. The WPS were no longer created with the goal of providing more adequate attention to women victims of violence, but in many cases solely to respond to political considerations.

A national consultation in Brazil – where the women's movement has not participated directly in the WPS almost since their founding – highlighted a new training proposal offered jointly by a women's NGO and the National Women's Rights Commission which would be facilitated by NGOs and made available to all policewomen. Aside from the national character of the course (in response to the recommendations of the National Public Safety Program), the goal is not only to train policewomen, but also other police personnel in the WPS (clerks, detectives). Despite being innovative, this proposal deserves some attention, while taking into consideration the difference between existing WPS models. It is not simply a matter of standardizing procedures, but of building awareness among professionals working in the stations (police as well as psychologists and social workers), to recognize the specificity of gender violence, especially the limits and obstacles that each woman confronts when making a complaint.

This survey of training of WPS officers and the procedures they use shows that providing visibility to violence against women by creating a specialized – read separate/separatist – service, does not by itself put an end to the cultural myths around violence against women, or automatically mean that women have full exercise of their rights. What emerges from the literature is that, despite having all women police officers, the procedures used in the WPS reproduce stereotypes and cultural norms about women.[7] So far, in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of procedures, and especially of training are found lacking in the literature. Without these analyses the quality of the services cannot be effectively assessed or improved.

## 6.  GENDER MAINSTREAMING WITHIN THE POLICE

Gender mainstreaming within Latin American police forces has two roots: recent approaches to feminist development policies and the shift from national to citizen security and democratization within transitions to democracy. A review of the theoretical elements of these two roots will be used as a framework to analyze existing mainstreaming initiatives in Latin American police forces.

Organizational gender mainstreaming is a recent step in the path of gender and development. Approaches to gender and development began by looking at how to get women into projects and programs. The challenges to bringing about women's equality and rights through development have led to the creation of many approaches. Gender mainstreaming borrows from organizational development to show that without mainstreaming gender throughout the organization, its programs will not be successful. One of the key insights of gender mainstreaming is that organizations are a part of the world in which they exist, therefore social relations in an organization will reproduce those in the world around them

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[7] Research on an Indian "Special Cell" has also shown that the police reproduce the norms. In this case, a woman's description of the violence she experienced must be corroborated a male relative in order for the police to believe her (Dave and Solanki 2000).

(Macdonald 1997), such as unequal relations of power of gender which create structural barriers to women's promotion. For gender mainstreaming to be successful, the mission, structure, programs, and even institutional culture must be changed. It is not enough to name someone a "gender focal point" and do a workshop on gender sensitivity. One guide defines 13 points to be considered for mainstreaming (Levy 1996). The "web" acknowledges relations of power in organizations. For example, not only does it recommend representative decision-making bodies for women's voices to be heard, it also argues that unofficial, mobilized interest groups need to exist to put pressure on the decision-making structures. A "gender focal point" alone is not adequate unless sufficient resources are available and the focal point is directly involved in policy and planning. Programs provided by the organization are also just one step in the web. Yet even organizational structure and programs are only a part of the whole. The most difficult part to transform of an organization is its culture: the attitudes, values and opinions shared by its members. Sustainable change is unlikely unless it targets the invisible and slow-changing issues (Bridge 1995; Macdonald 1997).

Mainstreaming gender within Latin American police forces has had two focuses: internal (women's employment equity) and external (citizen security). Citizen security has become the new framework for action for police modernization and democratization. But much of the mainstream citizen security literature take on gender – especially women's police stations – in the form of "women's issues" only in a particular section of their analysis: the increased complexity of crime due to acknowledging the home as the dangerous place for women (Bernales 1999) or part of changes demanded by civil society (Neild-ICCHRD).

A gender analysis includes these isolated insights and many more, while at the same time making the links between them based on an analysis of power. First, it deconstructs gendered assumptions of both civil society and the force. These include: the delinquent is always male; police action is repressive, not preventative; police action is focused on the delinquent and not the victim; police officers are men (GTZ 1999; Tamayo 1999). Second, it contributes to the construction of a new force with new values. One element of this new design is changing both the assumptions and the norms, policies, procedures, and practices that make them come true, for example, by having more women in decision-making and operational posts. Another element allows us to see that gender mainstreaming leads to both a more effective achievement of goals and a new definition of the goals. Examples include introducing and consolidating accountability (Essim 2000) and transparency (Macdonald 1997). For any organization these require substantial overhaul, but for police forces, particularly those in Latin America, these are revolutionary. As another example, because women's police stations are considered from a separatist "women's issues" angle, i.e. something separate from the rest of the police, they are not considered as concrete examples of either citizen security or community policing in the non-feminist literature.

Specialized police stations for violence against women have emerged at two different moments: a first moment when pressure for them came exclusively from the national women's movement as a way of making the police responsible to women and not within a citizen security focus and a second moment when WPS are seen as part of an overall gender mainstreaming strategy for which both the domestic women's movement and international donors put pressure from a citizen security and governance angle. In the first moment, where to place the WPS within the organizational structure of the police became an important item for debate. Whereas in Brazil a separate specialty was created (Nelson 1996), in Nicaragua they became a sub-specialty of criminal investigations (Jubb 2001). And yet in practice, the women's movement of both countries complains that the WPS are marginalized within the force.

The timing for implementing mainstreaming in post-conflict police forces is the most important factor for success. Evidence from Haiti and other countries suggests that mainstreaming needs to happen when negotiations regarding the transition are taking place, that is, from the very outset in order to successfully change values. If left for later social values become froze; many men feel like they are losing ground in a zero-sum game to enforce finite power/authority over others inside and outside the force (Fitzsimmons 1998).

The contributions of the WPS to gender mainstreaming are not apparent to the police themselves. The debate over a separate" space is also contentious for the police officers who serve there. In Brazil, the WPS are seen as "dead-end work" (Rifiotis 2001). In Nicaragua and Peru, researchers see a link between the WPS and an improvement of the status of women on the force (Jubb 2001; Tamayo et al. 1996). Even though the WPS have contributed to allowing women officers to enter the operational posts in greater numbers (seen as the real police work as compared with administrative or service posts), Nicaraguan police officers who spearheaded both gender mainstreaming and the WPS only see them as a service to the public, and not a major step towards mainstreaming. In Peru, the first graduation of women officers allowed for the WPS to expand their competence from investigating only misdemeanors to also including crimes (Tamayo et al. 1996). Indeed, up until that point, policemen were in charge of some WPS. This study also contributes to another issue for gender mainstreaming which involves comparing resources invested to workload. Despite their being much fewer WPS, the study suggests that they deal with more cases than the regular stations.

In El Salvador, a diagnostic study carried out for the European Union of the National Civil Police's (PNC) found that policewomen make up 6.37% of the 17,279 members. The lowest ranking members of the force (*agentes)* make up 82.08% of the total, while ascending ranks show a marked drop-off from *cabos* (one rank above *agentes*) at 6.99% to *subcomisionadas* (the highest rank attained by women officers) at 0.92%. Another important indicator of women's place within the force is the amount of women in operational posts. In El Salvador, 70% of women surveyed occupied operational positions, yet most of them testified that their superiors and colleagues only let them do administrative and other work that did not involve patrolling or making arrests. It found that of all those who participated, 64% of women had been discriminated against and 33% had not been; 54% of women had been a victim of violence and 42% had not. Of those who had been victims of violence, only 32% registered a complaint. The responses they received from the police included transferring either the perpetrator or the victim or ignoring the complaint altogether. All of the data is also disaggregated by rank to show differences in experience (or perception): none of the *subcomisionadas* surveyed had experienced violence, for *subinspectoras* the rate was 36%, and for lower ranks ranged from 55 to 58%.

The Consultative Gender Commission (CCG) of the National Police of Nicaragua has also carried out a study of women police (Policía Nacional 2000). Women represent 19% of the force's 6,209 membership total.[8] Of ranking officers, women make up between 19% of the lowest rank (*teniente*) and 11% of *subcomisionadas* and *comisionadas*. Despite women's significantly higher representation overall and by rank compared to other countries in the region, most Nicaraguan women police are located in services (e.g. cooks – 99%) and administration (e.g. Information and Analysis Office – 73%). Women make up less than 20% of the Criminal Investigations Department, of which the WPS is a sub-specialty. Unlike the other studies, no analysis of women's experience of discrimination or violence has been done.

Of these mainstreaming initiatives, the Nicaraguan one is both the oldest and, most successful. The impetus for improving women's status within the force began with a group of

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[8] This is a marked reduction from the 1980s, when women represented 35% of the total force (Otero 1999).

women senior officers (Jubb 2001). In 1995 they presented a small study to the national chief showing that women did not have the same access to promotions and training that men did. As a result, in 1996 the CCG was established as an official organ of the police. Its original purpose was to act as a women's professional association, lobbying for certain aspects of women's employment equity. Soon afterwards, the police approached the Project for the Promotion of Gender Policies of the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) to accompany their process of incorporating a gender perspective and providing a more effective response to gender-based violence (Otero 1999). The areas of work included: incorporating a gender perspective into the vision, mission and guiding principles of the force; improving record keeping; creating internal policies; developing public policies on gender violence and citizen security; strengthening the National Department of the WPS and the CCG; providing gender-sensitivity and violence training for all existing police and new recruits (Otero 1999).

The Nicaraguan police is without a doubt the most "women-friendly" force in the region. However, the assumptions and results of the initiative are limited by the separatist approach to women. On the one hand, the police has made significant advances towards incorporating an organizational gender perspective and on the other hand, it has only addressed the WPS and gender-based violence in terms of a service to the civilian population. No attention has been paid to detecting and arresting violence against women by and/or against police officers. These could be seen as a reason why the WPS continue to be sidelined within the force (Jubb 2001).

It is difficult to evaluate the outcomes of gender mainstreaming in the region because the processes are so recent and the lack of knowledge available about them. However, studies of women police on the force and attitudes toward gender mainstreaming by even sensitized police show that general social values about women are reproduced on the force and that change is a slow, political process. Perhaps ironically, gender mainstreaming does not necessarily strengthen the separate and marginalized position of the WPS.

## 7. POLICING WITHIN THE JUDICIAL PROCESS

To understand more fully police actions regarding violence against women it is necessary to examine the police within the judicial process: from legislation to the courts regarding both violence against women and the legal powers and attributions of the police. The general consensus of the literature is that legislation on violence against women has advanced much faster than its implementation, leaving serious gaps regarding women's exercise of their rights and their safety. There has been less analysis paid to analyzing and comparing the powers of the judiciary.

**Legislation:**

To evaluate legislation on violence against women a number of elements need to be considered. Tamayo (2000) suggests a framework for examining legislation that includes both the types of legislation – penal, civil, labour, and administrative – as well as the objectives of the laws – prevention, sanction, reparation of damages, and eradication of violence. Another issue is what kinds of kind of violence are included, for example, whether the legal definition in a particular jurisdiction of family violence includes physical, sexual, psychological and patrimonial. Sexual violence of different kinds has also been the subject of much legislation. Legislation can be a double-edged sword for women because it can not only make a crime out of what was once invisible not only violence against women (e.g. sexual assault, rape, sexual harassment, etc.) but it can also be used to persecute women [e.g. abortion, same-sex relationships, "crimes

of virtue" (*delitos de buenas costumbres*), prostitution]. But there are other forms of violence that are not as "domestic" or "private." One example is work-place harassment. Another is crime perpetrated by the state or its agents in periods of armed conflict or post-armed conflict situations and in peacetime.

The most common form of violence legislated in Latin America is family violence. In the 1990s most states in the region passed criminal laws on the matter (Tamayo 2000). They usually relate to psychological, physical, and sexual violence, and only in Costa Rica is patrimonial violence recognized. Protective orders introduced into family violence legislation marks a profound change in legislation from being solely sanctioning to also being protective. In Nicaragua, protective orders include: not going within 100 metres of the home, workplace or site of education; be re-integrated into the home; and withdrawing--- any arms in the aggressor's possession. However, protective orders are only contemplated for misdemeanors, not crimes. The authors of the bill – the Women's Network against Violence – considered that these preventative measures would be used to stop a more serious crime from taking place, assuming that crimes would all be tried (and the aggressor sentenced). Protective orders in Ecuadorian legislation are the most comprehensive in the region (Reyes and Camacho 2001). In some countries, such as Ecuador, family violence legislation includes ex-spouses, while in others, like Nicaragua, they are not. Ecuadorian legislation allows for the police to enter a home in order to apply protective order under certain conditions (Reyes and Camacho 2001). In Nicaragua protective orders can only be granted by a judge, which severely limits police actions and can even be contradictory to the goal of providing emergency protection (Prado Suarez 1997). Meanwhile, a new law in Honduras allows police to enter a residence and arrest an abuser for 24 hours with the oral consent of the abused woman. Enabling legislation is missing in both Nicaragua and Ecuador (Loli 1995).

Tamayo (2000) found that absolutely no state action had been made on the issue violence against women in armed combat. But the text of the Model Strategies specifically calls on states to condemn and recognize violence against women such as systematic rape, murder, forced pregnancy as violations of international human rights law (ICCLR 1999).

The women's movement has had a tremendous impact on violence against women legislation throughout the region (Tamayo 2000). It is because of women's successful advocacy and lobbying work around legislation, especially regarding family violence, that so many laws have been passed. The corollary to this may be that less attention by the women's movement to laws for other kinds of violence or around police powers has resulted in less gains in theses other areas. The passing of the family violence law in Nicaragua is an important example of successful advocacy (Ellsberg 2000). First, the idea for legislation on family violence arose from a national campaign of the Women's Network against Violence and member lawyers drafted the bill. In order to gain both popular and political support, both population-based and participatory research findings were publicized to convince legislators to pass the law. When the bill was in the national legislature, women lobbied their representatives on a permanent basis, taking advantage of having many allies. At one point, there was the threat the text would be watered down considerably, to which the Network responded by collecting 21,000 letters of support in a matter of weeks. In the end the legislation passed almost as it had been drafted.

One weakness of the judicial process – from legislation to the courts – is the classification and categorization of violence within legal codes. In Nicaragua the WPS only deal with the penal code, and more specifically two particular laws. Yet many women go to the WPS looking for help with getting a divorce or child support. Exit interviews have shown that many of these women were looking for support in an abusive relationship, but because they never mentioned

the abuse or that they wanted to press charges the intake staff would simply refer them to another centre.

**Implementation:**

Police lack adequate knowledge of the law. In Brazil, a new law that established Special Criminal Courts (*Juizados Especiais Criminais* – law 9099/95) has had many of its procedures distorted in the WPS. This is because either policewomen are pressured to act in accordance with bureaucratic procedure, or because they do not know the effect certain procedures can have on a complaint and on punishment for these crimes. An example is the handling of procedures otherwise than as proclaimed in law 9099, leading to a delay in police preparation of cases through to the judicial level. It is not possible to say that services for attending to victims constitute a network, not even within the stations, nor in relation to other women's police stations. This relation seems to be one-way. Service providers (in general NGOs linked to the women's movement) know the women's stations and their operations, and they orient women victims of violence to the registry of complaints. A special situation occurs if a women faces life-threatening risks. In such cases, a woman is directed to the police to make a complaint about the crime in order to obtain protection for her physical integrity through transfer to a shelter. The most common orientation from the police station occurs in case of alcohol abuse by the aggressor. He is referred to the AA. In cases of sexual violence, especially cases involving children and adolescents, the victims are referred to psychological accompaniment services.

One of the key elements of proving violence against women is having the necessary medical and/or psychological evidence. One barrier to acquiring this evidence is the very limited number of cases in which the Nicaraguan police investigate psychological injury (Jubb 2001). Psychological violence is recognized in Peru, Nicaragua, and Ecuador, but no standardized method of evaluating psychological injury has been adopted in any of these countries (Loli 1995; Reyes and Tamayo 2001). The Nicaraguan women's movement has maintained the position that the Severity Scale of Symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder contained in the DSM II manual should be applied, however the Supreme Court of Justice (CSJ) and the Forensic Medicine Institute has yet to recognize it. Also in Nicaragua, the state women's machinery got the CSJ to officially recognize doctors at women's NGOs so they could provide forensic medical exams. A Nicaraguan study in 1994 found that forensic medicine reports written by women doctors (only those affiliated to WPS) were considerably better than those written by men: men estimated the minimum amount of time for recovery[9], whereas reports by women included both medical and psychological injuries, providing a more comprehensive analysis (CENIDH 1995). Recently this gain in Nicaragua has been reversed. Over the last two years courts have refused to accept forensic medical certificates from anywhere but the forensic medicine institute. Experience of members of the Women's Network against Violence is that certificates issued from the state institute contradict those of women's centres. In Ecuador, where no specialized forensic medical services have been appointed for the WPS, getting a forensic medical exam impedes the judicial process for many women because of the time and money needed to get one as well as the possibility of revictimization (Reyes and Camacho 2001). Furthermore, police are not trained to recognized psychological violence so they will likely not make a referral for psychological testing or service.

Judges are key players and one of the major barriers to applying laws on violence against women. Studies in Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Peru find both a lack of creativity and willingness to apply the law (Loli 1995) and unfamiliarity with the law (Jubb 2001; Reyes and

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[9] In Nicaragua, a forensic medicine report includes: the severity of the injury and the length of time estimated for healing. Both elements are considered relevant for the court to determine the gravity of the incident.

Camacho 2001). Loli (1995) finds that officials of the justice system (police, prosecuting attorneys, judges) make a narrow interpretation while the women's movement understands it much more broadly. In Ecuador, where the violence against women law and the WPS law are one and the same, one study found that judges believed that only the WPS were authorized to apply the law (cited in Reyes and Camacho 2001). Despite the landmark gains of including protective orders in the legislation, they do not often get applied. In Nicaragua, police will only get an order to have a abusive man removed from his home if the property is in the woman's name. Although there is no legal definition regarding this, police claim that judges have imposed this criterion. Jubb (2001) argues that this effectively puts men's property rights above women's rights to physical, psychological, and moral integrity as guaranteed by the constitution. And because the orders are requested after a violent act, they lose their preventative character and get used as an alternative to pressing charges (Prado Suarez 1997).

Training of all members of the justice system is a near unanimous recommendation found in the literature to redress the problems of applying existing legislation. In Nicaragua, the Women's Network against Violence has even done some training of juries. In Ecuador, a training program with judges by the women's movement was found to be one of the best practices regarding violence against women in that country. Follow-up research found an abrupt change in sentencing: judges started making references to the Belen do Pará convention in their decisions. Research on violence against women has been incorporated into training with judges (Reyes and Camacho 2001).

Hence, what is involved is debate about how to strengthen the law and its application, shaping its principles to fit the specificity inherent in violence against women. There are already some efforts being made in that direction. There is a forum of entities that meets in Sao Paulo to discuss the application of the law that created Special Criminal Courts (law 9099/95) to cases of violence against women. This forum managed to open up an important channel for dialogue with the judiciary, and proposed some measures aimed at improving the functioning of special courts handling cases of violence against women. In other Brazilian states there are initiatives to set up special courts to attend to women victims of violence, adopting from the beginning the approach that women's police stations – or rather, the professionals working in them – should have some orientation on gender issues. Knowing the reality of the WPS, the question is whether the same situation is present in the courts.

## 8. POLICING IN INTER-SECTORAL COLLABORATION WITH THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT AND OTHER ACTORS

### A. Inter-Sectoral Collaboration with State and Non-State Actors

The ground-breaking contributions of the WPS relate not only to separate, specialized police services, but also – in many of the cases – to ongoing collaboration between the police, women's NGOs and other non-governmental and state actors. This inter-sectoral collaboration is not something extra, but fundamental to the nature and purpose of the WPS. Without it, the WPS might just serve for sanctioning; with it, the services are comprehensive and integrated. The need for inter-sectoral collaboration for improved services has been advocated by the women's movement, and it has also been recognized by researchers in Latin America and elsewhere,[10] and multilateral organizations, especially various UN bodies (Ellsberg and Clavel 2001; ICCLR 1999). There exist different kinds of collaboration in terms of what is coordinated and the relationships between the actors involved. Coordination can be organized for: service delivery, community participation, administration of services, and accountability. In most cases the police

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[10]Research on specialized units in India has also come to the same conclusion (Mitra 1999)

are in an either equal (but independent) or superior relationship to the other actors. However accountability and community policing models call for the police to share power with or even be subordinated to civilian and/or other non-military state bodies.

Collaboration for service delivery exists in the WPS of Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Peru. In Ecuador and Peru, direct user services are provided in coordination between the WPS and one women's NGO. Usually the staff of the NGO work from the WPS. In Nicaragua more than one centre is involved and users are usually referred to the centres from the police station, and state-hired social workers also work at the WPS. Other actors involved include state bodies (e.g. public health clinics, the prosecuting attorney) and other centres (from the children's and human rights social movements). All of these services are based on individual contractual relationships. These models are multi-disciplinary in that they combine policing, medical, psychological, legal and other services, including emergency shelter. They are also multi-disciplinary in the sense that each actor operates within its separate and distinct field, where collaboration happens between fields. Policing work is generally not subject to being questioned by the other actors. Women's centres also provide training to police in Ecuador and Peru (Reyes and Camacho 2001; Tamayo et al. 1998) as well as participate in public awareness campaigns in Bolivia and Nicaragua (Jubb 1999; Red 1997), among other experiences. Multidisciplinary services is a hallmark of successful WPS and an important contribution to governance because participation of the women's movement has been shown to improve the quality of the services. Yet in practice, very few women get transferred. An impact study of Ecuadorian WPS (Tamayo 1998) found that a total of 4.7% of users were transferred to the specialized services: 3.9% to psychologists and social workers and 0.8% received medical referrals.

The WPS can also be used as a model or basis of coordination for other cross-sectoral initiatives on violence against women. Inter-sectoral collaboration is crucial for improving state services for women, women's safety, and data registries. The Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) has led the way for vertical and horizontal coordination within the health sector and other community partners in terms of policy design, service delivery, and community networks. Existing collaboration in the Nicaraguan WPS was expanded to include the public health sector (Ellsberg and Clavel 2001). The Model Strategies also call for inter-sectoral and community collaboration. They emphasize links between the health and justice sectors and provide examples of coordination (ICCLR 1999). National plans regarding violence against women have also emerged in recent years as an example of broad state and non-governmental collaboration. These can be seen as both technical and political spaces since they involve negotiating between sectors (and competing perspectives on violence against women) and public commitments to ending violence. In Nicaragua the WPS served as a launching pad for this much broader initiative.

Another kind of collaboration involves community networks along with institutional responses. Despite the successes of the Ecuadorian WPS which are organized between the police and a women's NGO, one evaluation did recommend this more holistic approach to collaboration (Tamayo 1998). Though the WPS in Nicaragua also have a more structured model, there is greater room for collaboration with networks and groups that are not contracted. In one WPS in particular, community associations sometimes accompany women and children to press charges. Enthusiasm for the project in that department is so great that in many small and even isolated communities women's and community groups have taken the initiative to set up WPS outposts between the local police detachment and local community or women's groups without receiving any direct project funds. This model could also incorporate popular advocates (*defensoras populares*), who are trained by women's groups to work at the grassroots level to support and accompany women who break the silence.

The community model fits well with research on help-seeking by abused women and could be especially important for rural and indigenous communities. To repeat from above, seeking help has been found to be an important step along the path to leaving a violent relationship (Ellsberg 2000; Tamayo 2001). [11] Some women go to friends or family members, yet few women seek institutionalized help because of the isolation they feel. Rural women in Ellsberg (2000) were found to not use outside help at all, because of its inaccessibility. A diagnostic study in Iztacalco, Mexico that mapped where women go to seek help identified older women – particularly mothers and mother-in-laws – as both vital links with services and critical agents for changing norms (Barton et al. 1999). The WPS serving the Southern Atlantic Autonomous Region of Nicaragua was originally designed to serve all the communities of the region, all of which are only accessible through water transportation from the regional capital. Initial attempts were made that included meeting with the council of elders in indigenous communities. Community members welcomed the WPS as a way of reducing the communities' isolation but limited resources and bureaucratic administration from the capital made regular visits close to impossible. By contrast, some WPS in India have made very successful links with traditional elders councils for resolving conflicts and monitoring them at the community level (Poonacha and Pandey 1999).

Inter-sectoral collaboration also includes administration of the WPS in some countries. In Ecuador, the local head of the WPS is a civilian. The NGOs that provide services at the WPS are contracted through CONAMU. In Nicaragua (Jubb 1999) and Bolivia (Red de Atención 1997) there are commissions where the various actors involved in the WPS meet on a regular basis. These commissions are further broken down into topic-specific working groups (e.g. training, services, outreach). In both examples the commissions are decision-making bodies; their mandates include coordinating services and doing participatory planning. In Nicaragua during the first phase, when the contracts were signed by the state women's machinery (INIM), the national commission did not function, though local commissions did – and they reported to INIM. A national oversight body began to meet in the transition phase, and continues to function in the current second phase. Now all three national partners participate in the national commission (INIM, Police, and Women's Network against Violence) and there is a technical committee with the same members that meets weekly to guide the project. The budget is administered by a third-party administrative firm. There has been some dispute as to whether the administrating firm reports to the police, who signed the contract with the donors, or the commission of all three actors. In Mizque, Bolivia, where there are 15 members of the network, it is not clear whether a shared budget exists. The members of the network include: the mayor's office, hospitals, police, government ministries, NGOs, and the media.

In all of these examples, the police is either an equal or greater partner in relation to the other actors involved. Since collaboration happens between the field of expertise of one actor and the next, there is not institutional incentive to questions assigned roles. There is another possibility, in which the police are made accountable to the other participants or the public in general, however no such examples of accountability structures within the WPS or gender mainstreaming models were found in the literature. Since 1997 in Brazil, there are now ombudspersons at the state level who form part of the public ministry (Rothe 2001). They take complaints from the public and follow the process of investigation, action and reporting. They also provide information to the public and do analyses. Reports of complaints are now made public, which contributes greatly, along with public and media pressure, to changing the culture around the police. The Model Strategies (1999) gives various examples of local and national monitoring and accountability mechanisms. One example is an annual report to parliament based on police reports, others involve multi-disciplinary bodies. Their goal is to ensure the

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[11] See also the "Critical Path" studies sponsored by PAHO.

consistency of police response. The Model Strategies suggests that review mechanisms should evaluate the compliance of codes of conduct.

The WPS can be seen as important examples of both citizen security and community policing because they involve coordinated responses with local institutions and organizations. On the one hand, it is crucial to conceptualize the WPS as community policing initiatives given that services for violence against women need to be integrated and a woman may not leave an abusive relationship after the first time she seeks help. On the other, the WPS can change the character of community policing because it contributes to making the issue more visible. Yet little recognition for the WPS as community policing exists, either in the literature reviewed or in practice. In Nicaragua, for example, a consultation process on community policing was recently carried out with various sectors of the police, but the WPS were not included. Since community policing requires not only coordinated service delivery, but shared decision-making power with and accountability to the community (Neild 1998), incorporating these aspects into the WPS may lead to increased disputes among the partners. They could also provide for more effective services.

## B. Collaboration between the Police and the Women's Movement

It is crucial to examine the relationship between the police and the women's movement separate from the other actors involved because of the singular role played by the women's movement since before the inception of the WPS. It is the women's movement that first began to break the silence around violence against women and continues to be the strongest advocates for WPS. At the same time, the women's movement has also critiqued these initiatives. One of their contentions is that the police needs to apply the gender perspective to these services, as well as to the police force in general. Support for a strong role for the women's movement in the WPS is unanimous in the literature reviewed and consultations made (Hidalgo and Ramellini 1998; ICCLR 1999; Reyes and Camacho 2001; Tamayo 1998).[12] Thus the question is not whether the women's movement should participate, but how. The dilemma for the women's movement revolves around how to create an alliance with the state to ensure that women are empowered without losing their autonomy and identity (D'Angelo and Heumann 1999). These issues are raised indirectly in the literature on WPS, without any consensus.

In the 1980s the debates around the relationship between the state and the women's movement in Latin America were focussed on how women could get a "foothold" into the newly democratizing states (Alvarez 1990). Throughout the 1990s those terms have shifted towards debates around the institutionalization of gender in response to the increased presence of leaders from the women's and feminist in the state and civil society. These include examining the ambiguous outcomes of programs run by the state women's machinery which, even though they may be couched in a language of women's rights, actually contribute to furthering the state's neo-liberal project by stressing individual responsibilities (Schild 1998). Some feminist analysts examine the "blurring" between the state and civil society as particular activists and sectors of the women's movement become professionalized, institutionalized, and even "absorbed" by designing and/or carrying out the programs of the women's machineries (Alvarez 1999; Schild 1998).

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[12]The only exception is the Inter-American Development Bank which calls for all actors to participate in ending violence, but does not specifically consider joint state-civil society actions (Buvinic et al. 1997; Loreto Biehl 2001).

There is clear evidence in the literature that the participation of the women's movement in service delivery improves the quality of the WPS services and some examples have been given elsewhere in this paper. Santos (1999) states that the greater proximity to or distance of the police from the women's movement influences treatment offered to women victims of violence, and is reflected in the way in which crimes are framed when a complaint is made. Others have found that the quality of services is also better because of the training provided by the women's movement. The training provided to Ecuatorian judges by a local women's group was determined to be one of the best practices in that country by a panel of state and civil society experts (Reyes and Camacho 2001). After a diagnostic study examining the citation of international human rights law in judges' decisions the women's NGO developed a six-month series of conversations targeted at 100 members of the judiciary. Not only was there an almost 100% attendance rate, the personal and collective commitments that the judges made at the end of the period were reflected in their sentencing afterwards. A conclusion that can be drawn from the literature is that even though these initiatives are called Women's <u>Police</u> Stations, without the participation of the women's movement these services might become a kind of ladies' auxiliary like what used to exist in many police forces in the early and mid 20th century. These auxiliaries were tacked on to the regular police and the women officers who served in them were seen as social workers, not "real" police. In Nicaragua it has been found that where a local women's network exists in addition to the local WPS commission, the services provided to users by the WPS police are of higher quality (Jubb 1999).

There is little discussion of the role of the women's movement (whether inside or outside the WPS) in regards to advocacy and mobilization beyond the initial establishment of the WPS. The literature suggests that the before and during moments have distinct missions with their respective activities, and are carried out by different actors. Each of the following four experiences exemplifies the vast differences that can exist.

In the case of Haiti there appears to be a gulf between the police and the women's movement, without any coordination. Although the women's movement has been very active in raising the public profile of violence against women (Fuller 1999), no direct lobbying or mobilizing of the Haitian police took place during its first two years of operations (Fitzsimmons 1998).

In Brazil, the WPS were created in response to pressure by the women's movement. Many of its proposals regarding this model of attention were forgotten or shoved aside, for example, accompaniment from the women's movement within the WPS (Nelson 1996; Santos 1999). Nevertheless, the creation of the WPS was roundly celebrated and became one of the banners of the women's movement. Overall, as the years went by the feminist agenda became concerned with other issues – reproductive rights, paid work and unemployment, for example, sidelining the question of the WPS and their functioning. The groups active in this area carry out their work in an isolated way, unable to bring pressure to bear on the government. Criticisms have been made as well as proposals to alter this model, but the women's movement seems to be too organizationally timid in relation to the state to get any positive results in the short run. As pointed out by one of the activists consulted, there is a lack of unity of the movement to confront the state - one not disposed to dialogue, and that has put the issue of violence against women, as well as other issues related to women, on the back burner. The women's movement has acted in this arena, promoting campaigns and debates, as well as offering psychological and juridical support services. But, overall, they are services that do not result in a change in how the women's police stations operate.

By contrast, in Ecuador there is more than one form of articulation. In some localities of Ecuador, along with the NGO under contract to provide services in the WPS there are support

networks that operate more or less effectively, though it is unclear what formal relationship they have with the WPS or what kind of advocacy work they do.

The experience of Nicaragua is somewhat similar to that of Ecuador, and yet unique because of the high level of articulation. In Nicaragua there are WPS commissions at the national and local level in which all the service providers (police and NGO) as well as other interested community members participate in decision-making. At the same time, most of the NGOs who provide services are also affiliated to the national Women's Network against Violence and local networks (Jubb 1999). The WPS were discussed in one of the first sessions of the national Network in 1992 and the organization whose leader spearheaded the WPS is also a member of the Network. Therein lies the Network's competing claim to ownership of the Nicaraguan WPS which confronts the claims of the INIM (based on negotiating and signing the funding for the pilot and first-phase contracts and administering the WPS) and the police (based on the WPS institutional location and legal attribution). During the first phase of the WPS (1993-1998) the Network's working group on the Comisarias met on a regular basis to discuss the issues faced by the women's centres throughout the country that provided direct services at the local level and to develop advocacy strategies with the INIM and the police. Given that there was not a formal seat at the table for the Network (the national commission existed on paper but the INIM, which presided it, never called any sessions), they chose the donors as their target to get them to put pressure on INIM to resolve the problems with how the agency administered the project funds.

As a result of their advocacy work, the Network was awarded a seat at the table as one of the three national partners negotiating a second phase project and during the second phase, as part of the project's oversight body, the Technical Committee. The Network is now in a much different position. It continues to do advocacy as traditionally conceived – from outside the state, but it is now also part of the administration of the WPS from inside the Technical Committee. There always existed underlying tensions between those who brought a more contract-oriented, NGO perspective to the Network and those who were committed to advocacy and a social movement perspective. Now the Network is juggling both roles, and a resolution has yet to be reached.

The Nicaraguan experience sheds light on how the debates of NGOization are applicable to the WPS. The debates over the women's movement participation in the WPS – whether from outside or inside – are by no means tangential to the WPS. It does seem clear that effective advocacy by the women's movement does result in higher quality services that allows women to exercise their rights. The question is, how does the strategic problematic of the women's movement (maintaining their own spaces and feminist analysis while working in alliance with the state) get resolved so that the services provided in the WPS are not remedial – i.e. re-produce women's subordination to men and silencing of violence against women – but, rather strategic – engage users to demand their rights?

## 9. FUNDING AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION

There is little to be found in the literature on the WPS and gender mainstreaming in the police about the funding or the impact of technical assistance. Indeed, there is very little written about donor cooperation relations in the literature on the women's movement, gender issues, and the state in Latin America. One exception is Schild (1995) who traces the impact of changing funding guidelines and the Chilean state's decision to administer all foreign funds destined to Chilean NGOs on the work of urban popular women's organizations in Santiago, Chile. She argues that these changes led to a profound shift from projects focussing on

collective self-empowerment to ones of individual empowerment, thus allowing the state women's machinery, SERNAM, to impose a neo-liberal agenda on the women's movement. The lack of debate on the topic is not due to the lack of relevance, but the uneven power relationship between donors and recipients (Hately 1997). On the one hand, counterparts are reluctant to criticize donors because of their great vulnerability on foreign funds and, on the other hand, donors are held accountable to actors at home, not their counterparts.

It is not clear in the literature what the source of funds are for the WPS or gender mainstreaming, though it seems that, in general, gender mainstreaming is more dependent on foreign funding. In Ecuador and Nicaragua, as well as in a regional study, both donors and women's movement members have demanded that funds for the WPS and related actions on violence against women be a separate line item in national or police budgets (Hidalgo and Ramellini 1998; Jubb 1999; Reyes and Camacho 2001; Tamayo 2000). Indeed, the lack of funds dedicated to violence against women and gender issues may partially explain why so many advances have been made around legislation as opposed to designing and implementing public policy and national programmes. The lack of dedicated funds is in itself another indication of states' commitment to preventing and putting an end to violence against women, along with decisions to set up WPS or do gender mainstreaming. Reyes and Camacho (2001) argue that donors need to provide funding and technical cooperation to improve the Ecuadorian WPS, at the same time as they insist on public funding. They also argue that donors should coordinate amongst themselves to determine priorities, avoid duplication of funds, and ensure more effective results.

It is not just a matter of where the funds come from, but the conditions of those funds. During the first half of the 1990s there were more funds available both to the state and the women's movement because of the context of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) and other UN conferences during this period. Even if donors remain committed to the same programmatic issues, total funds donated, especially in Central America, has decreased and sustainability has become a priority.

The experience of the Nicaraguan WPS clearly shows the impact of foreign funding and conditionality on relations between the national actors. After the evaluation of first phase of the comisarias (1993-1998), the donors insisted on various changes being made to the services and administration of the WPS before funding a second phase. Some of the changes they imposed, based partly on the evaluators' recommendations (Hidalgo and Ramellini 1998), included a plan for financial sustainability following the three-year funding period, a cap on administrative spending, joint administration of the funds among all three national partners, and imposing a budget limit of $3 million (USD) as opposed to the $13 million price tag of the first proposal made by the national partners. While the original budget was both too large and not sufficiently substantiated, the cap on administrative funds should not be seen as purely a financial or technical criterion. For their part, the donors heeded the evaluators' call for a single project jointly funded by all the donors. Previous experience at the local and national levels showed that these coordinating commissions were political as well as administrative spaces, therefore limiting the functioning of these commissions through capping the funds had implications for the institutional and social sustainability of the WPS (Jubb 1999). The donors insisted on joint administration for the second phase to improve the project's effectiveness and efficiency (Hidalgo and Ramellini 1998), though they accepted a single counterpart for the funds: the police.[13] One indication of the influence of foreign funds is that the history of the WPS is categorized based on foreign funding.

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[13] Some of the donors would not accept the Women's Network against Violence as a counterpart because it is not legally incorporated.

This has caused a partial change in the power dynamics from the first phase, when the INIM would not give the commissions any budget information (even though they were responsible for planning and executing many of the project activities). Now that the police is the the single counterpart for the funds and is also attributed with the "ownership" of the WPS through the law, the police has more power than any of the partners had in the first phase. The police occasionally wield this power in relation to the Network, for example by not accepting candidates for bids who are linked to the Women's Network, yet in the first phase there was a strategic alliance between these two stakeholders. Therefore, criteria imposed by the donor should not be seen as merely technical, their ramifications for the political context should also be considered.

Another issue that emerges in the literature relates to the source of technical expertise. Technical accompaniment for gender mainstreaming has often come from foreign consultants. Several UN missions have designed and taught gender equity training courses to the Haitian police, yet members of the women's movement have yet to notice their effect. The gender fund of the GTZ participated in a three-year accompaniment project with the Nicaraguan police (Otero 1999), with the expertise of a Latin American (non-Nicaraguan) gender equity consultant. Though the project had the objective of strengthening the police's response to violence against women (Otero 1999) what resulted was gender mainstreaming that compartmentalized the WPS and no articulation between the national women's movement and the police in the project (Jubb 2001). The intention of these comments is not to dismiss outright the participation of non-locals, but to stress the need – just as is called for in the case of the WPS – of collaboration between the police and civil society, particularly the women's movement.

Although financial sustainability is an important factor that donors need to take into consideration, they also need to consider institutional and social sustainability. Dedicated funds from national budgets is one way of achieving institutional commitment. The strengthening of the women's movement and facilitating ongoing collaboration between the state and the women's movement can lead to both more effective and efficient spending of funds, mobilization to ensure long-term domestic pressure to maintain public funds, as well as meeting development objectives such as good governance.


## 10. MEASURING AND ASSESSING THE IMPACT AND SUCCESS OF GENDERED POLICE INITIATIVES

What is clear from the experiences of WPS and gender mainstreaming is that measuring their impact and success is by no means straightforward. Certainly the WPS has made violence against women more visible, but what has it done to achieve their objectives of preventing, sanctioning and eradicating violence? How have they contributed to women's security and citizenship or to governance? Few impact studies were found on the WPS, and gender mainstreaming is in most cases so new that impact studies have not been done at all. Therefore, instead of reviewing impact studies, this section will point out issues to be considered to assess the impact and success of these initiatives.

There are several reasons why one cannot precisely determine at this point the impact and success of the WPS. One is the lack of information, whether it be base-line studies (Reyes and Camacho 2001) or accessible and comprehensive police records (Larrain 1997), throughout the region. As such it is impossible to know whether violence has increased or decreased or whether reporting has as a direct result of the WPS. A second is the lack of indicators around WPS. Can their success be measured by the number of specialized units or the number of complaints filed? Do we measure the cost of the services in comparison to their impact on

stopping violence? Part of the process to define the indicators involves developing a clear and consensual understanding of preventing and ending violence. Furthermore, it is crucial to consider who is defining the indicators – whether it is the police, service providers, the women users themselves, or others.

Preventing and ending violence can be measured in different ways, some of which go beyond the WPS itself. For members of the women's movement, preventing violence can be done through education about rights so that a crime never takes place, whereas police think of prevention in terms of preventing a more serious crime than what was already committed. Ending violence is even more problematic. Research shows that most women do eventually leave abusive relationships, and that help-seeking is an important step in that process (Ellsberg 2000). So what might seem like a failure to a police officer because a user has withdrawn the charges or decided not to continue with the process, may in the long run turn out to be a pivotal moment in a long, complex, and difficult process.

Another angle would focus on women's exercise of their rights. The first step is for women to know their rights. There is some recognition in various countries that women recur to the police because they don't know where else to go. Police mediation is criticized because women receive inadequate orientation regarding their rights. Nicaraguan police believed that they do explain to women their rights (Torres et al. 2000). But exit interviews with users found that the police did not provide a detailed explanation regarding their rights, the law, or the judicial process, but gave them very short answers to the questions asked by users (Jubb 2001). The central issue regarding mediation and use of police resources is the inadequate orientation given by police to WPS users. By using gender as a category of analysis, it can be seen that users have a different approach than do the police or the women's movement. What is observed in practice is that when women seek help in a WPS, their goal is not always to denounce and punish their aggressors for having committed a crime against them. While the police argue that users do not want to press charges, the women's movement argues that the police does not provide sufficient orientation regarding their rights. It is not a clear-cut situation. In part what emerges is a contradiction between access to and exercise of women's rights.

Mediation is one of the most contentious aspects of the WPS. Brazilian studies by Soares (1996), Muniz (1996), Brandão (1998), and Amaral (2001) highlight the role of women's police stations in Rio de Janeiro and the Northeast in this regard. The national study found that these WPS had informally developed a policy for mediation and conflict resolution through extra-police activities that at least appeared to meet the interests of the victims. Although these studies stress the positive side of these procedures, it is not possible to know whether they stemmed from an institutional disposition or individual discretion. Likewise, we have no information about the impact this mediation work has had within the Brazilian women's movement. It can be argued that mediation, even when carried out in the police, is "a stretching of the law" and was never accepted by the women's movement. And today, when mediation has been formalized within the judicial realm, reactions from the Brazilian women's movement and elsewhere in the region have been quite negative.

Getting women to be conscious of their rights and to defend them requires changes in their gender identity and self-esteem (Camacho 1998). These are long-term processes. The question here is, how do the WPS fit into that process and how can their effectiveness be determined? The quality of services provided through the WPS, both by the police and NGOs, should be assessed in terms of how they contribute to this long-term process of raising women's awareness of their rights, not simply records of arrests and sentencing.

The WPS can also be assessed in terms of increasing women's security and recidivism. A Nicaraguan study on police mediation showed that about two thirds of police thought that settlements were not effective, while almost the opposite number of users thought they were (Torres Silva et al. 2000). Police in Nicaragua are divided as to whether mediation increases or decreases women's security. One assumption of getting women to press charges is that it is more likely to increase women's security than signing another agreement. Yet no studies were found to prove either of these points.

A number of indicators could be used to assess the impact of WPS and gender mainstreaming on women's exercise of their rights. Here are just a few. Indicators are necessary to show how the participation of the women's movement improves the quality of services. One indicator of gender mainstreaming could be individual women officer's exercise of various rights on the force. Another indicator would be the organizational location of the WPS within the force according to the web of institutionalization (Levy 1995). Indicators for WPS and gender mainstreaming should be combined, for example, to see whether the structure and values of the police have been transformed to make the WPS an effective agency for transforming the cultural acceptance of violence against women within the police so that women – on and off the force – will defend their rights. Other indicators could include financial, institutional, and social sustainability, cost effectiveness of services, and the quality of and coverage of services.

A crucial element of these indicators is the process through which they are defined. The criteria to assess WPS and gender mainstreaming need to be determined through a process of negotiation among the WPS stakeholders.


## CONCLUSIONS:

There are four important conclusions to be drawn from the literature reviewed in this paper. The first is the urgent need for data, analysis, and comparison to provide a comprehensive assessment of women's police stations and gender mainstreaming in the police in Latin America. In some countries there has been some research done; in Brazil violence against women from a juridical perspective is its own field of study – but there is little knowledge or analysis about the WPS shared between regions within Brazil or between countries.[14] Most research regarding gender mainstreaming has consisted almost exclusively of diagnostic and other studies done as part of the mainstreaming interventions.

The second conclusion is that there are outstanding contradictions between goals and outcomes and between the perspectives of the actors or stakeholders involved. The WPS had the goal of visibilizing violence against women and making it a public crime; in practice complaints are often settled through mediation and very few cases go to court. Another goal was to eradicate violence. Since statistics and data analysis are weak it is not possible to know whether increased reporting is due to a rise in violence or women's increased confidence to register complaints. For its part, gender mainstreaming has as one of its goals to ensure equality among women and men in terms of participation, decision-making, planning, programs, and policies. Yet one gender mainstreaming process left the WPS marginalized even though they are the site of the most operational positions for women in the force and the WPS's gender-disaggregated statistics were not incorporated into the general information system.

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[14] There have been some exchanges between countries already that have proven very effective for sharing experiences and comparing analyses among actors. Three examples are: ongoing collaboration between the women's movements of Peru and Ecuador, exchanges among Women's Networks against Violence in Central America, and meetings of high ranking women police officers of Central America and the Dominican Republic.

The third conclusion is that specialized WPS and gender mainstreaming in the police require intersectoral collaboration – particularly with the women's movement – both to ensure a focus on women's rights and a high quality of integrated services.

The fourth conclusion is that, despite the limits of data and analysis and the complexities of implementing WPS and gender mainstreaming, they are undoubtedly vital initiatives for improving women's citizenship and contributing to good governance. There is a unanimous opinion in the literature that the WPS are innovative and should be strengthened. Other than in the health sector, the WPS represent the most significant commitment on the part of the state to the position that women have the right to live without violence and to sanction and eventually eradicate violence against women. The WPS provide women with greater access to exercise their rights, while the partnerships with the women's movement and NGOs provide a singular example of ongoing state-civil society cooperation where previously the police was shut off from civilian influence. Gender mainstreaming improves the rights of women police on the force and also, through increased transparency and transformed policies and programs, to the general population as well.

Beyond these general conclusions there are several preliminary lessons that can be learned from the literature.

- A variety of models exist for WPS and gender mainstreaming. Each initiative has been created and developed largely *sui generis*. Among the variations between countries are: women's movement's participation, the kinds of violence and crimes dealt with, and the types of action that can be taken by the police.

- Women who go to the WPS are young to middle-aged adults with minimal education and many are unwaged homemakers. It is not clear whether they are representative of the population at large.

- Most of the complaints made at the WPS are about spousal violence and many of these get "solved" through out-of-court mediations by the police and, more recently, mediation by judges.

- The WPS were implemented with a "separatist" analysis which assumed that all women police (with or without specialized training) and multi-disciplinary services provided by NGOs would eliminate bias from the police and allow women to exercise their rights.

- Little has been done to change police procedures themselves in the WPS or to implement a gender perspective.

- Democratization and a strongly mobilized women's movement are two factors necessary for establishing effective WPS.

- The participation of the women's movement has been key to the WPS, including their establishment (in most countries), the quality of service delivery, and training to police and judges.

- Despite the previous lesson, the women's movement has been largely absent from gender mainstreaming initiatives.

- Very early learnings from gender mainstreaming point to some factors for success of gender mainstreaming: a felt need expressed from within the force; high-level commitment; technical accompaniment; and most importantly, introducing mainstreaming from the establishment of new forces.

- Gender mainstreaming does not necessarily change the marginalized position or "separatist" understanding of the WPS within the force.

- The judiciary is the weak link in strengthening women's rights, and judges' interpretations can constrain police activity.

- Joint administration and oversight of the WPS between the police and other state and non-governmental actors leads to better quality services.

- Impact of the WPS is difficult to assess or determine without consensus around goals and indicators of the WPS among the stakeholder groups, including the users.

- Women's police stations are exceptional examples of community policing and good governance.

- Donors play an intervening role in relations between the state and the women's movement that can affect power relations between them.

- Finally, the competing perspectives of WPS stakeholders must be considered and negotiated to define objectives. One important example is the definition of a successful case. Some of the criteria in the are: ending the violence in the current relationship, the user leaves the relationship, the aggressor does not re-offend, or the aggressor is found guilty and carries out the sentence. Criminalization of violence remains a contentious issue among all of the stakeholders.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A RESEARCH AGENDA:

These recommendations are based on the works reviewed in this paper and a consultation with regional experts and stakeholders.

### A. Methodology:

❑ Research should address and its outcomes should be destined to three levels: popular, public policy/advocacy, and academic.

❑ Stakeholder groups of the research are: the police, the women's movement, state women's machineries, users, and development cooperation. Each should be treated as subjects of the research.

❑ An interinstitutional methodology should be built up slowly, beginning by working with each sector individually.

❑    The research process must build trust between the actors (particularly the police, the women's movement, and users) throughout, from the research design to data analysis to research outputs.

❑    A preliminary study of existing models in the region should guide the selection of case studies.

❑    Sufficient meetings and workshops among the researchers are needed to build trust, ensure a comparative methodology is understood and used, and improve research quality.

❑    Local researchers participate in the research design using action research methods to ensure local perspectives are reflected and to increase exchanges of knowledge among organizations.

❑    Interview methodology provides safety measures for informants, multiple opportunities for disclosure, support for informants, and debriefing spaces for interviewers.

❑    Base-line studies of users and potential users are needed to form the basis for longitudinal studies on the impact of the WPS on rates of violence.


## B. Research Themes:

❑    A comparative analysis of the factors leading to the establishment and flourishing of WPS including democratization of the police force and the participation of the women's movement.

❑    Research on the contrasting perspectives and discourses on violence is an important basis for analyzing the contradictions between the stakeholders and finding points of agreement to make public policy more effective.

❑    Research on the factors that are more likely to lead to successful gender mainstreaming, including the difference between established and "new" police forces.

❑    Specialized training in the different countries is compared to determine what curricula and teaching methods are the most effective for changing police (in and beyond the WPS) and judges' attitudes and practices.

❑    Different forms of violence against women, not just spousal violence are researched to analyze and compare attitudes, procedures, and the impact of the WPS.

❑    WPS users and profiles of communities are compared with the survivor population.

❑    Research on mainstreaming examines the origin of the initiative as well as the role of donors and the women's movement in shaping the objectives and outcomes of mainstreaming.

❑    The relationship between WPS and gender mainstreaming is studied in terms of organizational location, attitudes towards promotions, and the role of the WPS within the force.

❑    Research identifies the range of responses to violence against women (from mediation to criminalization) and the advantages and disadvantages of each for improving respect for women's rights and reducing violence.

❑   Violence against women committed by and against police officers and institutional responses is studied as examples of both mainstreaming and WPS initiatives.

❑   Research analyzes whether women have greater access to and make greater use of medical, legal, psychological and other services.


**C. Research Outputs:**

❑   Indicators for impact and success of WPS are designed as part of the research and applied in the analysis.

❑   Research outcomes identify best practices in terms of effectiveness of: service delivery by the state and coordinated services with the women's movement; police record-keeping and analysis; training; increase in cases sent to trial; increased knowledge of rights; intersectoral administration.

❑   Research findings are presented and debated in public and exclusive fora at the national and regional levels.

❑   The research contributes to establishment of national registries and other initiatives to increase and improve data on violence against women.

❑   An on-line database of statistics is created.

❑   Research findings contribute to the strengthening of sectoral and inter-sectoral networks.

❑   Intersectoral forums are held, consisting of sectoral discussions first, and intersectoral debate second.

❑   Popular education materials are produced at the national level in local languages, and are developed as part of educational and outreach campaigns.

❑   Sectoral and inter-sectoral networks among stakeholders are strengthened through electronic and in-person information sharing and debates at the national and regional levels.

❑   A proposal for a monitoring system to analyze police services is designed.

❑   Locally driven choices for selecting how to use data in public awareness, public policy and advocacy campaigns are prioritized.

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