

Militarized Masculinities in the Guatemalan National Civil Police: Impact on the Lives of Women



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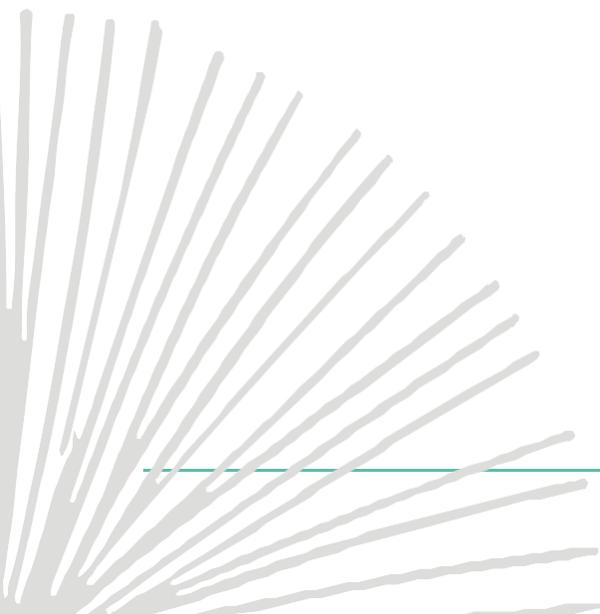
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Acronyms

AFPC	Agreement on strengthening the Civil Power
AHPN	Historical Archive of the National Police
APNC	Academy of the National Civil Police
CEG	Centre for Guatemalan Studies
CEH	Historical Clarification Commission
CIACS	Illegal bodies and clandestine security apparatus
CICIG	International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala
CNRP	National Commission for Police Reform
DEGPNC	Department of Gender Equity
DEIC	Specialized Criminal Investigations Division
FOSS	Forum of Social Organizations Specialized in Security Issues
GCE	Spanish Guardia Civil
MINGOB	Ministry of the Interior
MOPSIC	Police Model for Comprehensive Community Security
MP	Public Prosecutor
MINUGUA	United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala
OJ	Judicial Branch
PDH	Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman
PN	National Police
PNC	National Civil Police
RESDAL	Security and Defense Network of Latin America
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WISPI	World Internal Security and Police Index



Introduction

Security is a crucial force in maintaining democracy and human rights, by preventing and responding to violence and threats of violence. At the same time, in countries affected by conflict or authoritarianism, the security forces themselves can represent a threat to democracy, as they can be among the violent actors that commit human rights violations. This is why security sector reform (SSR), together with the reform of other State institutions, is one of the central elements of guarantees of non-recurrence, which in turn is the last of the four central elements for combating impunity as identified by the United Nations (2005).

In this report we examine the risk of militarization that has taken place in the last decade in the National Civil Police (PNC for its acronym in Spanish) in Guatemala. Militarization refers to a process in which military attitudes, practices and behaviors, which are common during conflict, become embedded and institutionalized in wider society and institutions, even when conflict has ended (MacKenzie, 2012). The militarization of the police refers to the use of an army security model, even though, police and army have different objectives and functions. In many armed conflicts around the world, like Guatemala's, threats and enemies were considered internal, making the police resort to a war mentality by militarizing their forces, and having the army combat internal threats, instead of external. In the country's internal armed conflict (1960-1996), security institutions were responsible for 93% of the execution of serious human rights violations (Historical Clarification Commission, 1999).

This report shows an increasing interest in keeping the army's role and military solutions for internal security threats in place even in the post-conflict situation. This occurs by assigning army members control over the Ministry responsible for the PNC, and through combined operations between the army and the police. Furthermore, the report shows a strong tendency of the use of violence and force by the police, and inadequacies in police training, which reinforce militarized tendencies. The oppressive and violent form of masculinity which characterizes militarized organisations persists in the PNC, with damaging effects for women, non-heteronormative and ethnically diverse persons within the institution, and for women and indigenous people in wider society. Despite the increase in women within the PNC, their position is fragile, and they are underrepresented in leadership positions, while they often feel discriminated or forced to adapt to masculine standards. These tendencies have a detrimental effect on citizens' and especially women's feeling of safety.

A crucial aspect of SSR is the separation of the military forces from the police, the latter institution being primarily responsible for internal security and the army for the defense of the country from external threats. Although initially, SSR was seen as principally focused on national security, in recent decades it has come to be seen as a more holistic process, which is built on human security and democratic governance (McGonigle Leyh, 2021), and entails the instalment of civilian control over military and security forces, the promotion of a culture of respect for human rights, and the adequate representation of women and minority groups (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2005). Through these measures, it is hoped that the commission of human rights violations by security institutions can be prevented in the future.

Gender and ethnicity are important aspects of SSR. It refers to 'a symbolic system, an organizing discourse of culture, which not only shapes how men and women live, experience and understand

each other, but is interwoven with and shapes other discourses, and therefore it shapes other aspects of the world' (Cohn, 1993: 228), including how security is understood. Strength and protection of the vulnerable are generally understood to be masculine characteristics. As a result, the security and armed forces tend to be very masculine sectors. It was only recently that women became fully accepted in the armed forces of many countries, and even so they tend to be predominantly represented in lower ranks and pay grades, for example in administrative positions. Men, in contrast, are trained for being effective at combating enemy threats, by promoting a combination of physical strength and endurance, aggression and fearlessness, teaching them not to show weakness in the face of threats, and promoting competition among men and control of men over less powerful groups, including women (Goldstein, 2001). Also, cultural diversity is not promoted and reflected in training. Such training creates a specific type of masculinity.

Masculinities are a social, cultural, and political construction, which consist of different characteristics, symbols and meanings considered masculine, or assigned to men, which are valued above the characteristics, symbols and meanings considered feminine. In patriarchal societies, the main attributes of masculinity are the use of reason and the devaluation of emotions, not having and not showing fear, being physically strong and willing to show this strength by fighting and competitiveness, to be successful in paid work and be actively heterosexual. The idealized image of what it means to be a man and possess masculine power in the social, economic and political spheres is called hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2001; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Olavarria, 2005). Armed institutions are an example of how hegemonic masculinity are displayed and promoted, particularly that it protects

hegemonic and masculine power in all its spheres.

Police forces are meant to deal directly with the civilian population and are the first resort in the case of crime or crises. They should have a civilian character but are often militarized in conflict situations. A militarized mentality in the police is displayed through the excessive use of violence as the main solution for problems; the use of threats, force, and a culture of fear to exert control; the dehumanization of political enemies (often minorities, poor people or activists and human rights defenders); extreme discipline, a hierarchical structure, and a patriotic hypermasculinity (Herzing 2016). Violence, and even sexual violence, is often used as a socialization and training strategy for soldiers and other armed individuals, and to mark relationships of power, both of men over women, who are assumed to be in need of protection, but also among powerful men over less powerful men (Jones, 2006; Simić, 2015). In this way, security forces are based on an exalted model of hegemonic masculinity in which domination over women and competition between men are constantly promoted (Goldstein, 2001). Hegemonic masculinity in military and police training is promoted through practices, discourses and values, and the use of weapons, which lead to a militarization of masculinity, in which militarism is glorified as 'the ultimate form of disciplined masculinity' (Higate and Hopton, 2005, p. 435). However, those that are in security forces (soldiers, police, security officers, or militia) are not men (or women) in power. Hegemonic masculinities also make use of subordinated masculinities to be the ones that use violence, in Guatemala being indigenous men and of low-income homes¹. Even if just a "politically correct" discourse, the use of physical violence is often not considered a respectable characteristic for all spheres of hegemonic masculinities.

¹Unfortunately the PNC does not keep records of the ethnicity of police officers, so as to have a number of how many are indigenous.

In fact, it is usually “subordinate men (be it hired thugs, low-ranking soldiers, and police officers or private security guards) carrying out physical violence on behalf of socio-economically more powerful men” (Myrntinen, Khattab, and Naujoks, 2016:5). In Guatemala, indigenous men were forcibly recruited in the military. Thus, militarism has been a tool of power to exercise control and domination in a violent way at the service of particular over societal interests. Militarism thus connects masculinity with politics.

With the changing role of armed forces in recent decades into a more humanitarian mission, and with a police force that is meant to prevent violence and respect human rights, a different, less aggressive, and militarized form of masculinity is needed. Nevertheless, often masculinities are not part of the gendered perspective that is promoted in SSR processes. Instead, such processes tend to emphasize the integration of women into the security sector. Women’s integration is believed to promote a more humane perspective in security forces, as women are seen as peacemakers who are better able to establish connections with the civilian population. Such ideas are also apparent from the United Nations’ Women, Peace and Security agenda, which calls for the inclusion of women as military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel in UN operations (Duriesmith and Holmes, 2019). Yet simply including more women is generally not enough to transform security sector institutions into democratic and rights-respecting forces, as a limited number of women are not able to transform an institution. Moreover, women tend to be included in less powerful positions, and are generally forced to assimilate and adapt to masculine norms and behavior to be accepted, thus maintaining a masculine logic. Simply being women does not necessarily mean they possess high levels of gender sensitivity (Higate and Hopton, 2005; Duncanson and Woodward, 2016; Duriesmith and Holmes, 2019). A stronger effort is therefore needed to truly transform security sector institutions into gender-sensitive and democratic institutions which respect human rights.

In Guatemala, the creation of the PNC in 1997 was a result of the Peace Agreement on Strengthening Civilian Power and the Role of the Army in a Democratic Society, signed in September 1996, which included necessary reforms in the justice and security sectors. It established the creation of the PNC with professional police officers, creating the police career and the National Civil Police Academy (APNC for its acronym in Spanish). Since the PNC’s creation there have been efforts to implement reforms to strengthen a professional civilian police force, and to diminish the previous militarized approach to security. The new PNC was meant to respect human rights and promote democracy and have a gendered and multicultural perspective.

In addition, Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security urges UN member states to include women as part of civilian police forces. It furthermore urges member states to adopt measures to protect the rights of women and girls, in relation to amongst others the police.

Methodology

This research was carried out with a qualitative methodology. To guide the search for information and subsequent analysis, indicators were defined to measure what civilian and militarized police forces look like. These indicators include elements related to the ideological aspects of a police force, as well as its organizational model. A bibliographic analysis reviewed similar studies, current laws, the APNC curriculum, gender policies, as well as a focused newspaper review for the period of January 2018 to March 2019 in relation to the changes and actions aimed

at militarization by the police and the Ministry of the Interior (MINGOB for its acronym in Spanish).

In-depth interviews with key informants with extensive knowledge on the subject, for example for having accompanied the PNC or being former police officers², and interviews and focus groups with police officers were conducted in five regions of the country (center, north-east, south, north-west, west) and at the APNC. Consultations were also held with victims’ organizations in regions where Impunity Watch works. The interviews and focus groups were carried out in coordination with the Department of Gender Equality of the PNC (DEGPNC for its acronym in Spanish) as part of the update of the diagnosis about women within the institution, which Impunity Watch supported together with the Fundación Justicia y Género. It is important to note that during the interviews and focus groups with

the police officers, we were not allowed to ask them directly about militarization, as the PNC’s interest was to establish the status of women and gender relations. Conducting the interviews and focus groups was also a training exercise for the DEGPNC in research tools.

The semi-structured interviews included open questions and were designed together with the research team and in communication with the coordination of IW’s Gender Area. Interviews with key informants addressed topics relating to the experience and specialty of each participant. Police officers were invited to recall and analyze past experiences, as well as their perceptions and feelings about their admission and training, service, gender violence and discrimination, evaluation and promotions, and masculinity.

Table 1. Women and Men Interviewed

	Women	Men	Collective
Key informant interviews	5	6	2
In-depth interviews PNC	13	7	
Total	18	13	33

Most of the police interviewees were agents (12), four were inspectors and sub inspectors, two administrative personnel, one student and one a police station chief. Ten of them have been in the police less than 10 years; seven have been there between 11 and 20 years, and three have been there more than 20 years, who came from the former police institutions.

Seven focus groups were held with police officers (one pilot focus group in Guatemala City, five focus groups on PNC districts and one in the APNC). In three focus groups only women participated, to create an environment of trust and safety to address issues that affect them, such as violence and harassment. In these and the other focus groups, perceptions and evaluations around the police model, the construction of being a policeman, gender relations, and masculinity were explored.

²The experts interviewed were: Helen Mack, former Commissioner of Police Reform; Leonardo Martínez, GIZ Citizen Security Advisor; Sergio Palencia, expert in the case of the massacre in Alaska, Guatemala; Sandino Asturias, Oswaldo Samayoa and Iris Portillo from the Centro de Estudios de Guatemala - CEG; Rosa María Wantland from the Institute of Education for Sustainable Development – IEPADES; and Iduvina Hernandez Human Rights Defender. For security reasons, the names of former members of the PNC are not given.

Table 2. Regions of Focus Groups

Place	Women	Men	Total
Guatemala (pilot)	9	4	13
Escuintla (south)	12	6	18
Quetzaltenango (west)	2	15	17
Sololá (Northwest)	18	0	18
El Progreso (northeast)	17	0	17
Guatemala (center)	7	6	13
Academy	20	0	20
Total	85	31	116

The interviews were transcribed and coded thematically based on the indicators described above. Participants are anonymized to protect their identity, and a letter and number code is used when interviewees are quoted.

This report is structured in three parts. The first one describes the formation of the PNC itself and the process of police reform, as well as the PNC's structure, composition, and current situation in relation to the inclusion of a gender perspective in the PNC. The second discusses the tendencies towards the militarization of the PNC which have been apparent in recent years, as well as the extent to which this is related to masculinities. The third describes the impact of this militarization and masculine gendered perspective on the lives of women, both within the PNC and in the wider society. The report ends with conclusions and recommendations towards dismantling remilitarization practices and strengthening the PNC as the principal institution responsible for ensuring the safety of the population, especially women, and improving the status of women as police officers.

This research is the Guatemalan case study within a comparative research project between Guatemala and Burundi, 'Militarized masculinities and gender violence within post-conflict societies.

1. The National Civil Police

This part describes the origins, structure, training process and gender perspective of the PNC, in order to better understand the tendencies towards its militarization and the detrimental impacts of the institution's functioning on women's (feeling of) safety. Crucial for this is an understanding of the democratic and citizen security approach as a basis for the institution. Secondly it addresses two overarching problems that the institution currently faces, which are connected to the process of militarization: the precarious material and labor conditions which affect the performance of the police force, and corruption. The last section describes attempts that have been made to reform the institution in the last decade, which have aimed to dismantle the trend towards police militarization and promote an institution that effectively protects citizen security.

1.1 Security Forces During the Internal Armed Conflict (1960-1996)

During the internal armed conflict, the National Police was subordinated to the armed forces and complied with intelligence and control functions as part of the broader counterinsurgency strategy. It committed different human rights violations, including illegal detention, torture, sexual violence and enforced disappearance among other crimes. During that time operated a notorious body of detectives known as ‘the judicials’ (los judiciales) in charge of investigation, prosecution and apprehension of political and social leaders that criticized the government. This proves the police’s involvement in political persecution operations that were not within its formal competence (Ruano, 2018: 92). There were also non-uniformed police forces, such as the PN’s Special Investigations Section, which were designed as an immediate reaction force which carried out covert operations against the urban guerrillas. This command led the operation of the massacre of the Spanish embassy in 1980 (ODHAG, 1998: 72), as was demonstrated in the conviction against the head of the unit in charge on January 19, 2015 (Impunity Watch, 2018: 77). Elements of both the National Police, the Judicials and the G-2 (military intelligence services) participated in these events (CEH, 1999, Volume II: par. 1169).

The Historical Archives of the PN (AHPN), which were found and recovered in the early two thousand³, also give an account of the use of the police as an apparatus for control, monitoring and killings of people known for their social justice work. The AHPN contains files on the most well-known political murders in Guatemala (Doyle, 2007: 52). These were often carried out in collaboration with the army, whereas according to the CEH truth commission report, the police itself were always militarized (1999 Volume II: par. 1164-1165). During the government of Romeo Lucas García (1978-1982) a group known as ‘the brotherhood’ was formed. This informal group, with members of the Intelligence Directorate, exercised control over the military and civilian powers, even during civilian rule, and directed the counterinsurgency policy. This policy produced terror among the population and fear internally in the army. The brotherhood even participated in activities of drug trafficking (CEH, 1999: par 1039). The group shows the connection between police, army, and government, which is dangerous for citizen security, and contrary to the ideal civilian model of policing.

For that reason, the Peace Accords (1996: Subsection B. Art. 22 and 30) which terminated the internal armed conflict includes the creation of a new institution named the National Civil Police, with a democratic and human rights perspective. The Accords established the strict separation of the new PNC from the army, to break with the control that the army could otherwise continue to exercise over the PNC, while the latter was meant to be the sole institution responsible for citizen security. The ministry responsible for the PNC was therefore from now on the Ministry of the Interior (MINGOB, for its acronym in Spanish). The PNC law⁴, signed in February 1997, defines that the PNC’s new mission was to be ‘the Institution in charge of protecting life, physical integrity, the safety of people and their property, the free exercise of rights and freedoms, as well as to prevent, investigate and combat crime while preserving order and public safety’ (Art. 9), and that the PNC’s action must respond to ‘the demands of human rights and its condition as an essential public service’ (Art. 11). This was however no easy feat, since in the Guatemalan social

³The AHPN were discovered by the Human Rights Ombudsman -PDH in 2005. Their existence, like other military archives, was denied by the government of Álvaro Arzú before the CEH, limiting the investigation into the role of the police security services in the report ‘Guatemala Never Again’.

⁴Decree number 11-97

imaginary, the subordination of the police to the army has been a persistent idea for over a century (Ruano, 2018: 82).

1.2 Creation and Gendered Structure of the PNC

The PNC Law established a period of one year to install the PNC. It began to work with 2,592 members of the first class, but only achieved national coverage in August 1999 (PNC, n.d.: para 3). In this process, 143 people were dismissed for corruption, including bosses, agents, and administrative personnel (Government of Guatemala, 1999: 43, cited in Ruano, 2018). International experts advised on issues related to democratic security and civilian models of policing, and the experiences of Spain, Peru, Chile, and El Salvador were shared as examples. Constitutional reforms were needed to separate the functions of the army and the new PNC. However, the negative result of the 1999 referendum on the constitutional reforms derived from the peace accords left the possibility open for the army to take up tasks of citizen security which were clearly meant to be the sole responsibility of the PNC. This maintained the social imaginary of the police's subordination to military power and the militarized logic of counterinsurgency command and control against the population.

The PNC inherited forms, practices, and structures from the previous police and security institutions. For example, although the PNC was supposed to be a new police force, numerous agents of the PN – who had participated in the counterinsurgency project – joined the new police institution. These were called 'recycled' police officers. As a result, the initial structure of the PNC did not vary much from that of the PN. An interviewee explains that 'the leadership of the PNC, once the uniform changed, remained the same. They changed from being the director of the National Police to the director of the National

Civilian Police and its command structure remained the same' (EH1). In the PNC's first three years, about 58%, roughly 11,000 out of 19,000 agents, were 'recycled' police officers (Sieder et al, 2002: 39). This meant that the command posts were occupied by police officers who were used to the practices prevalent during the armed conflict, while it took considerable time for the new agents trained in the new police academy to reach intermediate positions, which was needed to change the image and acts of the PNC (FOSS, 2018: 18). The United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) identified the risks hereof in terms of recycled agents' negative prior experience, their low levels of education, and the short basic course they received, which was insufficient to transform their mentality and provide them with the knowledge and technical tools necessary for the new, civilian police work (MINUGUA, 2001).

Many "recycled police" members rejected the restructuring process and did not see the need for a new approach to security, professionalization, or for efforts to prevent serious human rights violations from being committed again. This contributed to the persistence of patterns of militarization within the PNC. In addition, from the beginning of the PNC, the illegal and clandestine bodies in the country known as CIACS, discussed in more detail in the next section, impeded the new police from gaining an autonomous position, instead aiming to maintain militarized control of security and the new police. An example was a special team created at the end of 1999 by MINGOB at the request of businessmen to combat a wave of kidnappings of members of the economic elites (Solorzano Foppa, 2018). This team conducted investigations without judicial review or coordination with the prosecutor in the case, they collected evidence without a judge's order and organized their work with codes with unknown purposes and



Photo: ABCgovBR on VisualHunt

controls (Ibid.). This example shows how crime fighting bodies were structured without following the proper legal procedures.

MINUGUA started training the existing security forces through various programs, focusing on the democratic and multi-ethnic nature of the new PNC. It also focused on incorporating the subjects of human rights, gender, and multiculturalism in the police curriculum, and opened training in the police academy to participation of civil society organizations. In the last stage of MINUGUA accompaniment, it focused on a more comprehensive curriculum reform (Martínez, 2007: 19). Nevertheless, the government refused to incorporate the new approach that MINUGUA promoted and decided to give the Spanish Guardia Civil (GCE) leadership over the process of the PNC creation (Ruano, 2018: 120; EIH1). Since the Guardia Civil is a military police force, their training again installed a militarized model of policing, thus contradicting the civilian approach set forth in the peace accords. According to an interviewee, the Vice Minister of Security at that time considered that 'Guatemala has a militarized culture, so it needs discipline, [...] so the GCE was the indicated institution to train the new police' (EIH1). Furthermore, 'the government preferred to avoid the Salvadoran model of multiple donors, and the confusion of opinions' that, according to them, was produced by this model (Martínez, 2007: 18). GCE leadership, combined with the high percentage of members of the previous PN, who had actively participated in the military-led counterinsurgency campaign during the armed conflict, thus created a vision of a military rather than a civilian police doctrine. In a civilian policing approach, the interests of the citizens rather than national security should be guiding. Nevertheless, incomplete transformation of the policing culture is common in police reform processes internationally, where it is often seen as easier to train and equip police officers, than to truly undertake a more complex and costly comprehensive reform process (McGonigle Leyh, 2021). The following table shows the strong differences between a civilian and military approach:

Table 3. Characteristics of Civilian and Militarized Models of Police

	CIVILIAN MODEL	MILITARIZED MODEL
Values	Democracy	Obedience, hierarchy, and discipline
	Liberty	Safety
	Legality	Efficiency
	Respect for human rights	Excessive use of violence
	Respect for cultural and gender diversity	Patriarchy, misogyny androcentrism and machismo, racism, homophobia
Structure	Decentralized and subject to local power Gender equity	Centralized, hierarchical, and vertical Exclusively male commanders of military origin

Source: based on Bustos Ramírez (1986)

Militarization implies a vision of the world where the use of force is an acceptable, or even desirable option to address problems. A militarized response will therefore be one of attack and violence, risking the disregard of prevention measures that seek to resolve the causes of violence, crime, and insecurity. This affects the behavior of individual officers; police agents can come to see themselves as an army who are fighting a dangerous enemy, and not as public servants who need to comply with the law (Lawson, 2018).

Currently, the PNC has 27 police stations nationwide, six in Guatemala City, and one in each of the other departments. According to official data, in 2021 the PNC had 41,680 police officers, of whom 16% were women (6,863) and 84% men (34,817). Like other State institutions, the percentage of women has increased slightly over the years. In 2020, there was a significant increase of women in the police but was reduced again in 2021. Despite these changes, women continue to be outside the spaces of power and decision-making.

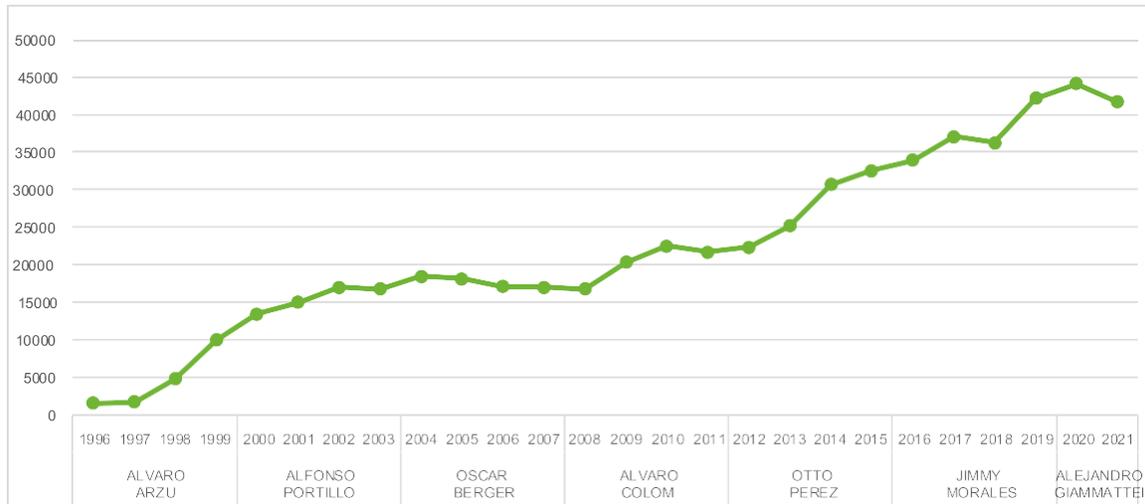
Table 4. Total Female and Male Police Officers Per Year

Sex	2019		2020		2021	
Women	6,769	16%	12,174	27%	6,863	16%
Men	35,372	84%	31,893	73%	34,817	84%
Total	42,141	100%	44,067	100%	41,680	100%

Source: PNC. (Request No. 729-2022)

In 2019 there were no new police officers, because the government decided not to train new agents due to the lack of funds to pay them when entering the PNC. The following table shows the increase in the police force according to the governments since the creation of the PNC.

Figure 1. Number of Police Agents by Year and Government



Source: Sub Direction General for PNC Personnel. (Request No. 2603-2019).

The PNC is organized as a General Directorate whose highest authority is the MINGOB. It has a Deputy General Directorate, and nine General Sub Directorates. It is structured in a hierarchical way with different lines of command. Currently the PNC has four scales: top management, superior officers, junior officers, and the basic scale. These are different from the composition of the army. Some analysts identify the names of the positions and scales, as well as the uniform, as symbols of demilitarization (EHI1).

Table 5. Comparative Table of Hierarchy of the PNC and Guatemalan Army

PNC command scale	Army command scale
<p>a) Hierarchical Management Scale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ General Director ▸ Second General Director ▸ General Deputy Director 	<p>a) General Officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Major General ▸ Brigadier General
<p>b) Hierarchical Scale of Superior Officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ General Commissioner ▸ Commissioner ▸ Deputy Commissioner 	<p>b) Senior Officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Colonel ▸ Lieutenant colonel ▸ Major
<p>c) Hierarchical Scale of Junior Officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ First Officer ▸ Second Officer ▸ Third Officer 	<p>c) Junior officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Captain First ▸ Second captain ▸ Lieutenant ▸ Second Lieutenant
<p>d) Basic Hierarchical Scale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Inspector ▸ Deputy Inspector ▸ Agent 	<p>d) Troop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Sergeant Major ▸ Technical Sergeant ▸ First Sergeant ▸ Second Sergeant ▸ Cape ▸ First class soldier

Source: Unit of Public Information (UIP), Police Hierarchy and Ministry of Defense.⁵

⁵<https://uip.mingob.gob.gt/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Jerarqu%C3%ADa-Policial-PNC.pdf>
https://www.mindef.mil.gt/grados_militares/grados_militares.html

There have only been two women as Director since the PNC's creation. In 2020, only two women occupied the second highest rank at the managerial level (General Deputy Director). In 2021 there were no women as directors or general commissioners, men occupy 100% of the four highest ranks. Only three women were commissioner representing 5.2% at this rank.

Table 6. Number and Percentage of Women and Men Police by Rank 2021

Rank	Men	Women	Total
General Director	1 100%	0 0.0%	1
Second General Director	1 100%	0 0.0%	1
General Deputy Director	8 100%	0 0.0%	8
General Commissioner	6 100%	0 0.0%	6
Commissioner	55 94.8%	3 5.2%	58
Deputy Commissioner	108 93.9%	7 6.1%	115
First Police Officer	222 91.4%	21 8.6%	243
Second Police Officer	243 88.4%	32 11.6%	275
Third Police Officer	271 87.1%	40 12.9%	311
Police Inspector	690 91.0%	68 9.0%	758
Deputy Inspector of Police	648 88.3%	86 11.7%	734
Police Officer	32333 83.7%	6277 16.3%	38610
Administrative Personnel	231 41.3%	329 58.8%	560
Total	34817 84%	6863 16%	41680

Source: PNC, 2022 (Request No. 729)

More women (58.8%) are in administrative positions compared to men (41.3%). Comparing the distribution of women and men in the different divisions, most of the police agents are assigned operational positions, 78.7% are in the General Sub Direction of Operations, in charge of special forces and the district police stations nationwide. Of those, 75% are men and 25% women. This means that citizens' experience of the police on the street and in the station is more likely to be that of a masculine institution.

All the divisions and management offices have a higher presence of men. The General Sub Direction of Personnel and the General Sub Direction of Police Health have the highest presence of women, 49.3% and 44.1% respectively.

This is consistent with a stereotypical view of the division of administrative and operational labor between women and men. Secretarial and administrative work is considered more appropriate work for women, since it requires less physical effort than operational work on the street. For this, it is assumed you need to be fit and have the physical strength to work long hours without eating or drinking. This is a more masculine capability.

Table 6. Number and Percentage of Women and Men Police by Rank 2021

Offices and directions	Women		Men		Total	
General Direction -DG-	256	21.3%	948	78.7%	1204	2.9%
Second General Direction -DGA-	105	26.3%	294	73.7%	399	1.0%
General Sub Direction of Operations -SGO-	4525	14.4%	26987	85.6%	31512	75.6%
General Sub Direction of Criminal Investigation -SGIC-	969	23.3%	3197	76.7%	4166	10.0%
General Sub Direction of Personnel -SGP-	198	49.3%	204	50.7%	402	1.0%
General Sub Direction of Support and Logistics -SGAL-	116	24.7%	353	75.3%	469	1.1%
General Sub Direction of Studies and Doctrine -SGED-	96	22.5%	331	77.5%	427	1.0%
General Sub Direction for Crime Prevention -SGPD-	173	25.5%	505	74.5%	678	1.6%
General Sub Direction for Police Health -SGSP-	138	44.1%	175	55.9%	313	0.8%
General Sub Direction of Antinarcotic Information Analysis -SGAIA-	263	13.4%	1700	86.6%	1963	4.7%
General Sub Direction of Information and Communication Technology -SGTIC-	24	16.3%	123	83.7%	147	0.4%
Total	6863		34817		41680	100.0%

Source: PNC, 2022 (Request No. 729)

In two focus groups, several women stated that some men use this idea that women prefer administrative work as an excuse so that women do not accompany them in operational tasks and do not limit them from carrying out illicit or corrupt activities. According to these women, men feel watched because women are deemed to be less corrupt (GF1,5). However, in a previous study, women expressed that they in fact do like carrying out operational tasks, because they do not like to be locked up: 'in those [operational] tasks, there is more activity, you learn every day. Operationally, the schedules are heavier, and the family is neglected, but they include important activities that are very rewarding' (IEPADES-PNC, 2015: 35). It is also interesting that the second place where there are more women is in the General Sub Direction of Criminal Investigation (SGIC), particularly in the Specialized Division in Criminal Investigation (DEIC) – almost 15% of all women work here, while only 9% of men are in this Division. This reflects a trend towards a change in the division of administrative and operational work between women and men, towards a professionalization of the police for both women and men.

Police training and career

The peace agreements highlight the importance of adequate police training and professionalization of the police career since previous security forces did not have permanent or specialized training. All the members of the new PNC had to receive training at the Police Academy (APNC), which was created at the beginning of 1997. Training especially focused on the promotion of a culture of peace and respect for human rights. Between September 1996 and December 1997, the GCE assisted in the establishment of the APNC and in the initial training (Martínez, 2007: 18). The police academy and the training processes were furthermore supported by the UN, mainly through MINUGUA, but also by UNDP, the European Commission and the Netherlands, focusing on different aspects and perspectives such as children, gender, multiculturalism, criminal investigation, and human rights policy. As a result, the Offices of Human Rights, Victim Services, Gender Equity and Community Police were created within the PNC. Civil society organizations were involved in the training of instructors and specialized manuals were produced (Martínez, 2007). These processes have been important for strengthening the capacities of PNC agents and for promoting a different vision of citizen security. However, the reform of the curriculum has not been a very structured and integrated process but was carried out in a rather ad hoc way. As a result, it did not have great impact on changing the approach of the PNC from a military to a civilian one. Moreover, like in most institutions, the continuity of these processes depends on the political will of the authorities, and unfortunately, some of these processes have been stalled. Some interviewees point out that it was especially the administration of President Alfonso Portillo (2000-2004) that made changes that weakened the process of police reform, and that promoted the army's

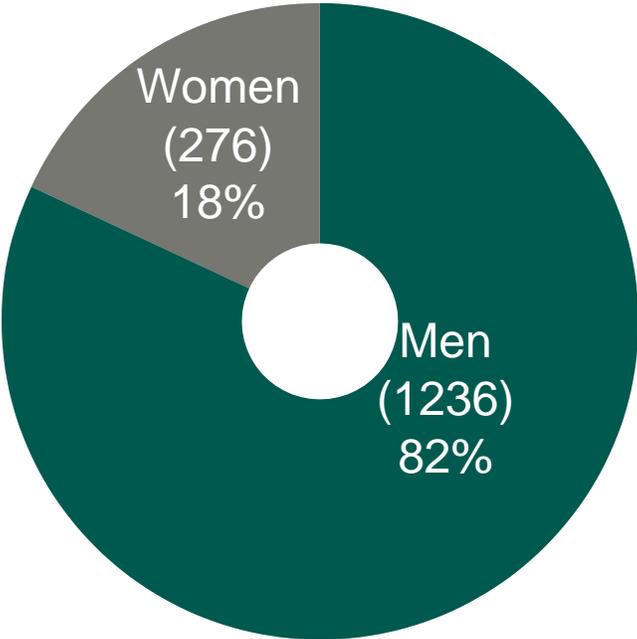
renewed participation with the PNC (EHMI6; EHI3).

Currently the General Sub Direction of Studies and Doctrine of the PNC, formalized in 2012, is the governing body of the education and teaching units, including the APNC, the School of Training of Police Officers (ESFOP), the School of Higher Studies of the Police (ESPOL), and the School of Police Specialties (EPOL). The APNC is the first training center for new agents and before the creation of the other schools it was responsible for all training. With the creation of the other schools, the possibilities of professionalizing and specialising the police increased. However, these three new schools, function with calls for promotions and specializations, and therefore they have not been systematic in their operation. In 2018 the general police training lasted nine months, during 2019 and 2020 there was no basic course and in 2021 the basic course was reduced to six months. This is insufficient for the professionalization of the police, especially when recruits largely come from rural areas where general levels of education are low, as is the case in Guatemala. In most countries worldwide, basic initial training lasts at least one year. However, in several Latin American countries training can last less than six months (Nield, 1998). This requires that efforts are made throughout the police career to become professional and for officers to continue to be trained according to their branch of specialization. The inadequate length of the training that new recruits receive, as well as the options for further specialization, are not sufficient to form professionalized police, again showing the lack of political commitment with guaranteeing truly civilian police.

The current APNC syllabus is organized into four areas specifying the total hours dedicated to each one in the nine months of the course: police functions (1235 hrs.), legal issues (240

hrs.), social humanistic issues (216 hrs.), information technology and communication (36 hrs.) (See annex 1). The curriculum reflects a vision of the doctrine of democratic security and human rights, and includes subjects such as police doctrine, basic principles of police action and human rights, procedures in cases of domestic violence and violence against women, human rights, national regulations in relation to women and children, and gender equality. Nevertheless, the greatest time is reserved for the police practice module, followed by the subjects in police operations within the police methodology module, as well as the physical (sports) module and police skills. As for police identity, there is a greater emphasis on aspects such as salutes, marches, and police formations than, for example, on the police doctrine. In the focus group of the APNC, participants indicated that the formations, marches, and greetings are held every day, while according to the curriculum only 24 hours in total is dedicated to police doctrine. Similarly, initial training in the academy promotes rigid discipline. Each day begins at 5:00 in the morning with militarized acts such as training and marching. There thus seems to be a greater emphasis on physical, operational, and symbolic aspects of police work than on the legal frameworks in relation to human rights and violence, gender, or conflict resolution skills, which should be central in the process of building a truly civilian police force that instills trust in the population and prevents crime rather than responding violently to it. In this way, the police training process currently continues to reflect a military rather than a civilian style of policing, thus doing little to transform the culture of policing, for which seemingly trivial issues such as police uniforms or training methods can prove crucial (McGonigle Leyh, 2021).

Figure 2. Number of Agents Graduated in the APNC in 2021



Source: PNC, 2022 (Request No. 729-2022)

In addition to the APNC, the PNC has implemented a Bachelor of Police Science, with a duration of four years, and a Police University Technical Degree in Scientific Research, also with a duration of four years. In 2017, 72 members of the PNC graduated from these (62 men and 10 women). According to official information requested from the PNC, in 2018 and 2019 there were no promotion courses, whereas in June 2019, the PNC published on its social networks that 68 police officers (55 men and 13 women) had graduated, several of them with a Bachelor of Police Science. Additional specialization courses on offer are diverse and focus on security and protection aspects of certain sectors, such as tourism, borders, and nature; criminal investigation and laboratory, also including the training of specialized teams such as special forces or anti-narcotics commandos. These courses are not studied widely. According to official data, in 2018, a total of 403 people (14% women and 86% men) studied the ten specialization courses that were offered, which represents a mere 1% of the total number of police officers for that year. The course in which most women participated was the Specialization Course in Criminal Investigation (34% women), whereas men mostly joined the Specialization Course in Special Police Forces (98 men and 2 women). In 2019, only three specialization courses were offered: Anti-narcotics Operations Command, Inspector General; and Ports, Airports and Border Posts. In 2021, 395 police members (9.8% women, 90.2% men) graduated from three-month courses specializing on subjects such as police administration and management, supervision and service control, police services (Morales, 2021a). And in July 2021, 321 police members enrolled in the promotion courses to move up to a higher rank (Morales, 2021b). For some time, the PNC promoted the professionalization of PNC members by granting scholarships and permits for agents to continue university careers. However, these facilities are not currently promoted, or are limited by requirements or bureaucracy. As long as the professionalization of the police is not effectively promoted, attention to the security of the population, the investigation of crimes and the proper handling of crime scenes will be insufficient, enabling a continuing pattern of impunity.

In terms of the investigative function of the PNC, the support of MINUGUA helped in ‘the modernization of the specific investigation units and the disciplinary regime of the PNC’ (Martínez, 2007, p. 19). The United States Government also contributed with training in investigation and police capacity, financial support for operations, infrastructure and equipment (Martínez, 2007, p. 20). The case of Facundo Cabral from 2011, investigated in collaboration with the UN-sponsored International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), is an example of how the PNC’s investigation team can have efficient results (International Crisis Group: 16) and reflects a change in the professionalization of the PNC’s research area. At least two key informants interviewed for this report highlighted that the police investigators have become stronger than the Public Prosecutor’s Office investigators.

Professionalizing the police also requires an adequate level of prior education. In 2012, only 15 % of those who took the entrance exam passed (International Crisis Group: 19). In recent years, this percentage has varied, with 6% in 2015 and with the highest percentage at 19% in 2017. In 2019 and 2020 there was no call. These low numbers reflect the low standard education in the elementary and basic level that people have when applying, thus showing the need for more intensive and longer training at the AHPN than is currently provided. In addition, the number of people applying to the Police Academy (APNC) declined, from 40,000 applicants in 2015 to just under 15,000 applicants in 2018 (General Sub Direction for Studies and Doctrine, PNC, n.d.). Women comprised an average of 27% of those who enrolled in the APNC in 2015-2018, yet of those who passed the course and entered in 2018, only 13% were women. For many women,

the main difficulty lies in the physical tests. A male police officer says that there were few women in his promotion:

Many women deserted because of the exercise they were forced to do. They did things to make people desperate and leave. They said that the training was to endure, and to get used to being in situations where they were going to have to endure harsh conditions, or without food (EHI5).

Women who participated in those first calls speak of the difficulties they faced:

I realized many things, everything we experienced as women, so many harassments that on that occasion were committed by commanders, instructors (...) So I was very disappointed and wanted to go, because I realized that it was not what they had announced, but there were two colleagues who were teachers, and they convinced me that we can generate that change (E13MA).

The motivations for joining the PNC, shared in interviews and focus groups are similar for women and men: in the first place for economic reasons, followed by the desire to serve the country from a patriotic notion of security service, and thirdly, the desire to follow a family tradition. The possibility of job stability and retirement are the main economic motivations. After serving 20 years within the institution, they can opt for a full retirement. For several women the economic motivation is related to autonomy, not having to depend economically on a man, and breaking with violent relationships. In the focus groups in the West of the country, the participants expressed that normally in this region, women do not receive an education and do not inherit land from their parents. Therefore, entering the police guarantees them a secure income and the possibility of continuing their university studies and building up retirement entitlements. One participant explains: 'I wanted to work with the government no matter in which institution, but I wanted to have a job which was budgeted for, which would last for years' (GF1). Also, the possibility to develop professionally is valued: 'I have been able to study the legal and social sciences career' (GF1).

Belonging to a police or military family is another motivation for joining the PNC: 'I have eight uncles at the institution, I tried five times [to enter] [...] my brother and I are here' (GF6). In some cases, individuals received support from their families to prepare for the entry exam, although women sometimes experienced less support, because of the difficulties that women can face in the police, and the negative perception that exists about policewomen. Another interviewee adds: 'Since I was a child, I wanted to be a policeman. My father was a military man, and he raised us with a lot of discipline, he was very macho, we now have a different ideology' (GF1). Gendered norms of discipline and masculinity that are connected to police work can be transmitted across different generations in one family, and generate admiration:

First of all, since I was a child, I wanted to be a police officer, since I was a girl. My dad is a policeman, I love this institution because my grandfather was a policeman, my dad is a policeman, my uncles are policemen. And for me it is a very dignified job, it is a job with which one can serve and sincerely I have always focused on service, with my little hands I have done many things, to serve (EMA22).

A third motivation was the desire to serve the country or help the population: 'I believed that I could do justice, help young people, for example, children who suffer violence, such as sexual violence, but inside there are rules, like laws, you cannot take justice into your own hands' (GF5). These different motivations coincide between the various promotions of police officers. However, the motivation to serve was most evident among the PNC's early promotions, who were motivated by the change that the new police institution meant. The climate of the recent signing of the peace accords promoted hope for democratic change. With the most recent promotions, economic motivations and family tradition predominate.

The gender perspective in the PNC

In terms of a gender perspective, referring to a strategy with the intention of modifying or transforming the gendered inequalities that exist (Fritz and Valdez, 2006: 103), the PNC has made two important advances: it has created a Department of Gender Equality (DEGPNC) and a proposal for an internal policy for gender equality. Yet although these advances contribute to institutionalizing a gender perspective, in practice they have limitations. They were extremely necessary however, to dismantle the idea that the PNC was built with a 'neutral' vision regarding gender, meaning it was designed without making visible the needs of women and men, to generate changes focused on equity. An example of this is the language used in the PNC law, which identifies the members of the police as male, with no acknowledgement that women can also be police agents and indeed reach top management positions. Feminism has pointed out the false neutrality with the use of the masculine generic. Language communicates thoughts, feelings and ideas which can reproduce and transmit stereotypes (Alameda, 2019). Using the male form as universal makes it harder to imagine a more gender equal institution with a stronger participation of women.

Like several State institutions, the DEGPNC started as a Unit. In 2002, the Gender Equity Office was created through General Order 04-2002. In 2009, the PNC's Gender Equity Section was created through Government Agreement 97-2009 as part of the General Sub Direction of Operations of the Ministry of the Interior. In 2012, the Gender Equity Office became the Department of Gender Equity (DEGPNC) through Government Agreement 153-2012 that reforms the organization of the PNC and places the Department of Gender under the General Sub Direction for the Prevention of Crime⁶. The functions of the DEGPNC include to promote gender equality in the police career and prepare proposals to improve working conditions for PNC personnel, include a gender perspective in crime prevention, and promote awareness about gender in the institution.

⁶In addition, there are the Departments of Intervention in Community Relations, Preventive Guidance, Children and Adolescents, Multiculturalism and Culture and Sports.

In November 2014, the Policy for Gender Equality between men and women was adopted. At that time, the DEGPNC was new, and the Policy was an effort of the National Commission for Police Reform (CNRP) – which will be described in the last part of this section – and not an internal proposal of the PNC. The creation of the Gender Policy considered inputs provided by academics, civil society organizations and international organizations that accompanied the PNC, for example through diagnoses undertaken by MINUGUA, UNIFEM, RESDAL, The Myrna Mack Foundation and the University of San Carlos of Guatemala (MINGOB-PNC-CNRP, 2014: 19). Key to this achievement was the role of the CNRP with the support of the international community. The Policy raises eight philosophical principles (equality, gender equity, identity, non-discrimination based on gender, co-responsibility, guaranteeing human rights, accountability, multiculturalism, multilingualism and multiethnicity) and actions in three fields: internally within the PNC, externally in terms of service provision, and in crime prevention, especially in cases of violence against women” (CNRP-MINGOB, 2014: 11).

One of the strengths of the policy is that it includes a strategic plan for its implementation. This plan contains two vertical axes (criminal investigation and crime prevention), and six transversal axes (institutional organization, training and professionalisation, human resources, technological platforms, internal controls, and logistical support management). The policy does not specifically address masculinities, as all objectives are directed towards the promotion and emancipation of policewomen. This shows the persistent understanding of ‘gender’ as a synonym for ‘women’, which does not evidence an understanding of gender as a relational concept, which also involves men. For example, actions include the promotion and

empowerment of policewomen in criminal investigation work, the inclusion of a gender perspective with cultural relevance in the police career, the comprehensive training and professionalization of policewomen and the guarantee of decent working conditions for them, and the incorporation of a gender perspective in the internal control systems, disciplinary procedures and the actions of the PNC Inspector General. The policy also proposes a 75% increase in cases resolved by the femicide unit (2014: 28).

One of the main actions is the incorporation of more women at all levels of the PNC structure. There is however a clear bias regarding the functions and roles that women should fulfil. In the area of human resources, it proposes an annual increase of 10% until reaching parity (2014: 33). In the criminal investigation area, the women’s quota is reduced to a minimum of 5% to integrate work teams, and a minimum of 2% to participate in investigation specialization courses (2014: 27). The difference in the quotas established for the incorporation of women in the different fields reflects a perception of the contribution of women to the prevention of violence and not so much in investigation. One of the most recurrent perceptions about women in the PNC is that they are included because ‘a man cannot register a woman’. This perception reflects an instrumentalization of the presence of women, to prevent men from being accused of harassment or violence against women. Women are not included because of their equal capacity to undertake police functions, or because of specific benefits that they can bring to the institution, such as greater empathy and communication skills. Nor is the importance recognized of building a police force that reflects the population, to generate trust among the population. Furthermore, although these actions are all important and can in the long run produce changes, focusing on women rather than gendered power

relations risks placing a burden on women to integrate and assimilate in an otherwise masculine institution, rather than promoting changes in behavior of both men and women (Duncanson and Woodward, 2016).

The proposals to increase the participation of women are part of the international tendencies in the SSR which tend to emphasize the integration of women into the security sector. Women's integration is believed to promote a more humane perspective in security forces, as women are seen as peacemakers who are better able to establish connections with the civilian population. Such ideas are also apparent from the United Nations' Women, Peace and Security agenda, which calls for the inclusion of women as military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel in UN operations (Duriesmith and Holmes, 2019). Also, masculinities are rarely seen as part of the gender perspective that the SSR agenda promotes, and simply including more women is generally not enough to transform security sector institutions into democratic and rights-respecting forces, as a limited number of women are not able to transform an institution. Moreover, women tend to be included in less powerful positions, and are generally forced to assimilate and adapt to masculine norms and behavior in order to be accepted, thus maintaining a masculine logic. Simply being women does not necessarily mean they possess high levels of gender sensitivity (Higate and Hopton, 2005; Duncanson and Woodward, 2016; Duriesmith and Holmes, 2019). A stronger effort is therefore needed to truly transform security sector institutions into gender-sensitive and democratic institutions which respect human rights.

The implementation of the Gender Policy was paralyzed with the suspension of the Police Reform process – discussed in the last part of this section – because the policy was a proposal by the CNRP.⁷ Unfortunately, given the political context, there was no major reaction against its suspension, not even from the international community. This is a shame, because incorporating a gender perspective in the PNC responds to national commitments, enshrined in the Constitution, and international commitments on security and non-discrimination for women, such as the Belém do Pará Convention (1994), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), and the Santo Domingo Consensus on Public Security (2009). As mentioned in the introduction, also Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR1325) and related resolutions (1820, 1888, 1889, etc.) of the United Nations Security Council urge member states to take measures to prevent violence, particularly violence against women, in all areas and to promote access to justice. Moreover, they recognize the leading role of women and the importance of their full participation in peacebuilding and the prevention of violence. Resolution 2106 points out the importance of including more women at the higher levels of the justice and security sector. The 1325 National Action Plan NAP, created in 2017, includes a series of actions that the PNC is responsible for, like the promotion of women in high ranks and decision-making positions, the creation and implementation of gender policy and protocols, internal training on women's rights and violence against women, the strengthening of criminal investigation of crimes against women, and the strengthening of comprehensive attention models for victims of violence against women (MIMPAZ, 2017). However, in Guatemala, the ratification of these international instruments has not led to the incorporation of their content into the daily practice of State institutions, including the PNC. In fact, few agents know their contents and the State's commitments. The police academy syllabus does not include international regulations. In conclusion, there is no

⁷In January 2020, the PNC's deputy director of prevention considered that it was necessary to create a gender equality policy 'that includes men' and that it should be the PNC's own construction, not external, thus implying that the current proposal was created from outside and did not correspond to the PNC's reality (personal communication).

effective gender perspective or strategy within the PNC. Although there have been important efforts to implement concrete actions in favor of policewomen, they have stagnated.

1.3 Police Reform

After some serious cases of human rights violations committed by the PNC between 2000 and 2006, such as cases of torture in which the police were involved, further reform processes were undertaken. The PDH report to the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment highlights that during the period in which Carlos Vielmann was Minister of the Interior, in 28 out of 50 cases (56%) of torture, those responsible were police (PDH, 2006: 31). During this period, the cases known as Gavilán, Pavón and Parlacen also occurred, explored in more depth ahead, which reflect the old vision of ‘annihilation’ of populations considered enemies of the state, and included the extrajudicial execution of inmates who controlled drug trafficking, extortion, kidnapping and other criminal activities originating from this prison, and the assassination of three Salvadoran members of the Central American parliament. Four agents were arrested in the latter case, but they were murdered in jail days later (Martínez, 2015).

This escalation of criminal acts that involved the PNC laid the foundations for the proposal for a reform process of the institution. In 2007, Minister of the Interior Adela Camacho de Torrebiarte began this process, which coincided with the creation of the CICIG, whose objective was to support the MP, the PNC and other State institutions both in the investigation of the crimes committed by members of the CIACS and in the dismantling of these groups. Likewise, in 2009, the justice institutions (Public Prosecutor’s Office and Judicial Organ) and the Congress signed the National Agreement for the Advancement of Security and Justice in which a specific

element related to police reform was included: the creation of a Specific Commission for Police Reform, which would design a proposal for a comprehensive reform of the PNC.

As a result, in 2010 the government of Álvaro Colom created the Presidential Commission for Police Reform (CNRP) (Governmental Agreement 361-2010). Its subsequent commissioners were human rights activist Helen Mack (2010-2011) and former Minister of the Interior Adela Camacho de Torrebiarte (2012-2018), who made reform proposals to the police. However, both commissioners faced obstacles in institutionalizing changes and reforms. For example, in 2011 the Framework Law for Police Reform (Initiative 4424) was presented, but in spite of a favorable opinion from the Congressional Commission on Justice Sector Reform, it was not approved.

Commissioner Mack made a diagnosis of the situation of the PNC and identified several serious problems, including the lack of doctrine and command; the lack of professionalization; operational inefficiency; weak inter-institutional coordination; corruption; poor leadership; inadequate training and specialization processes; lack of professional evaluation and monitoring systems; lack of professional career and a distance between the police and the community (Avalos, 2011). Mack prioritized training and a change of vision on the national security doctrine. She explains: ‘what we tried was to make them aware of the importance of knowing how to differentiate that the police doctrine is totally different from the military doctrine. That was a cultural change. Even Carlos Menocal, who was the Minister of the Interior at that time, made fun of us saying “this works only in philosophy”. Well, yes, philosophy was the key’ (personal communication).

Camacho de Torrebiarte identified as priorities institutional organization, criminal investigation, internal control systems, crime prevention and human resource management

(Celada, 2019). Although both commissioners recognized the inheritance of militarism and machismo that exists within the police, and both promoted the participation of women in the higher ranks of the institution and an improved PNC approach to violence against women, they did not raise the need to address the construction of masculinities within the PNC. This again shows how gender is commonly seen as a synonym for women, thus failing to analyze and address masculinities.

They did however achieve some important changes, especially related to police training and in terms of the improvement of criminal investigation, directly linked to the capacity building process. Another important and symbolic advance was the creation of internal regulations, such as the new Comprehensive Community Security Police Model (MOPSIC), created in 2014 with the aim of 'Fostering professional capacity, police effectiveness and ties of trust with the community, in order to optimize the police service, reduce the indicators of violence and contribute to citizen coexistence' (PNC, 2014, p. 13). Several interviewees referred to the importance of this model and its enforcement. Nevertheless, the CNRP recognized that it was not possible to intensify the internal purification processes of the PNC. Another obstacle to police reform is its lack of independence from MINGOB. For several interviewees, the police's functioning depends more on who leads the MINGOB than on the PNC Director (EHI1, EMI2, EHI3, EHI5, EHMI6, EMI7, EHI8, EHS15). This shows the failure of former commissioner Torrebiarte's aim to institutionalize police reform, instead of being dependent on the minister in charge at a given moment: 'Our challenge is to give the institution enough strength to resist the tendency of each government to undo all that its predecessor has achieved' (International Crisis Group: 9). The police reform process was eventually terminated by Minister of the Interior Enrique Degenhart Asturias (February 2018-2020). On May 8, 2018, Adela Camacho de Torrebiarte resigned from office. In statements to the press, she said that the authorities never gave support or importance to the bill for reforms in the PNC (Vásquez, 2018).

1.4 Precarious Conditions and Corruption

A major challenge that complicates the further professionalization of the PNC are its precarious labor and material conditions. The obstacles most mentioned in the interviews and focus groups were linked to low salaries and the conditions of police stations. The majority of those interviewed indicated that they received a salary of around Q4500 (approximately \$580) per month. Both men and women indicated that this is not enough to cover family expenses. A complicating factor for women is the costs needed to cover child and family care costs, if they work and live far away from their community. There have been efforts to improve agents' salaries, but this has not been successful (GF4). For example, at the beginning of 2019, the Minister of the Interior announced a salary increase for agents, but at the end of the year this had not materialized. Some agents consider that the declaration was merely a measure to minimize discontent within the police force, indicating their low level of trust in the institution's leadership.

As for the conditions of the facilities in the police stations, these vary in each region, but in most departments the agents sleep and rest in the police stations. Most stations have separate bathrooms and spaces for women and men, but this is not always the case, and depending on the number of officers there is a feeling of overcrowding. A police agent compares their situation to the army:

There are times where there are 20 agents and one bathroom for everyone. Usually there are separate bathrooms, but that's an exception. In the army, in contrast, everything is good. [...] I would like us to have our own facilities since we mobilize more on the street. In police stations there is no food, so you have to go find some and cook. We do not have a dining room, unlike the army. The army has fields, luxury facilities. Ammunition is given to the army, not to the PNC (GF3).

In some places police have had to share the space with the detainees in the police station, as explained by a key informant: 'I had gone to visit the police station in Salamá, it made me so sad [...] some cells were their rooms and in the other cells were the prisoners' (EMI2). In the Academy, there are not enough showers, and some students have to get up at 3 am to shower or otherwise use the sinks. Furthermore, the interviewees indicate that they do not have enough resources to carry out their work, such as printing paper for complaints or reports, supplies for the maintenance of the facilities, gasoline for the patrol cars, or even drinking water for the police agents. This creates distrust towards their superiors:

The police chiefs are responsible, they have to pass requests to the director and then it goes to MINGOB, but nothing ever happens. They demand that one gives 100% but they do not give the necessary inputs. They do not allow one to improve oneself, if one studies it is necessary to compensate the time given. I have worked so many years, and they have never allowed me to move up in rank (E17MG).

Part of the explanation for these issues has to do with the PNC's organizational model, which is centralized. Decentralization would allow each police station the decision-making power to improve the facilities and change the logic of the barracks in which the police agents live, preventing shifts of 48 hours or more without adequate conditions to rest and eat. The way in which the police is currently organized reflects a militarised model, as it is centralized, hierarchical and vertical; police agents are quartered rather than close to the community, and work in long shifts. These characteristics do not correspond to the ideal model of a civilian police force.

The precarious conditions are also a limitation for the PNC to protect the human rights of the general population, since if PNC agents' own rights are violated, it is difficult for them to recognize the fundamental role that respect for human rights plays in their work of protecting citizen security. These conditions also favor acts of corruption. Among interviewees, it was generally accepted that there is corruption in all spaces of the PNC. They believed that due to the low salaries it was very common, and in some way justified, for PNC agents to seek other ways to generate income or personal benefits. Another practice that is accepted and standardized within the PNC are attempts to obtain bribes from the population. In at least two regions they mentioned that these operations are called 'massacres': 'Many colleagues go out to bisnear (slang for doing a business), to ask for bribes for fines, because they have a lot of debts. The older agents promote that with new agents' (GF5). Gasoline theft by the police to sell is naturalized. In the case known as Gasofa, in 2013, nine members of the PNC, including commissioners, inspectors and police officers, were convicted for their participation in the smuggling of gasoline (CICIG, 2013). There is also a prevailing perception that the commanding officers promote abuses between different hierarchical positions and that they even promote corruption. For example, in order to be able

to leave on rest days, in some police stations there is an agreement that the agents have to bring their bosses a lunch or a meal.

There are indications of the participation of the PNC in various criminal acts, and the criminal investigation area was perceived as a structure similar to the intelligence agencies and death squads during the internal armed conflict. In its beginnings, this area of the PNC was considered an area where despised officers were sent. Similarly, there are indications of links between the PNC and MINGOB with organized crime and drug trafficking, since as the International Crisis Group points out, as of 2007 the Central American region became the main route for cocaine shipped north from South America (International Crisis Group, 2012). The police's relationship with drug trafficking and organized crime is established through a link with the army. An interviewed former police officer indicates that 'the army has always been involved in drug trafficking, and they want to control the police to ensure the transfer of weapons and drugs' (EHI5). According to a newspaper report, there is a structure within the PNC, known as El Cartel de la Charola, which is dedicated to stealing and selling drugs (El Periódico, 2014). Several government ministers have faced or are facing charges of corruption or extrajudicial executions, including Salvador Gándara, Carlos Vielman, Francisco Jiménez, and Mauricio López Bonilla. Likewise, at least two former directors of the PNC are in jail – Marleny Blanco Lapola, and Erwin Sperisen (International Crisis Group, 2012: 6).

Corruption weakens the police because it prevents agents from establishing an institutional identity in line with their mandate to serve the population. Many police officers do not connect their work with the official mandate, but rather with doing what 'the bosses order'. This lack of institutional identity, in a non-professional and extremely hierarchical police force, reinforces a militarized model of

policing. What predominates is the chain of command, and agents simply follow superior orders. This command structure prevents the agents to develop their own criteria for judgment. Although corruption does not necessarily include the use of violence, it does imply an exercise of power to obtain resources illegally. In turn, it reduces the legitimacy of the police institution and societal trust in it, facilitating impunity and the undermining of democracy (Portillo and Molano: 2017). From a masculinity's perspective, corruption can function as a way to maintain privileges, obtain and experience power, and as a mechanism that allows men to fulfil their assigned gender role of provider, especially in a situation where legal options to be successful as a breadwinner are limited. Precarious working conditions and corruption can therefore not be seen in isolation from gender norms which maintain an idealized image of men as tough, economically successful, and fearless.

These high levels of corruption might also explain the considerable level of societal distrust in the police, which reflects that the population does not feel protected. Although the level of trust towards the PNC has increased in recent years, it is still below the Latin American average. For 2018, the Latinobarometer registered 25% confidence in the PNC, while for the rest of the continent it was 35% (2018: 48). The army registered a higher percentage of trust, with 33% (2018: 33). According to the Free Survey, published in May 2019, 30% of the population trusted the PNC, while the level of trust in the Army was 52% (Álvarez, April 5, 2019). Organizations of victims of the conflict shared examples of the police not arriving due to lack of petrol or a car to mobilize. Furthermore, for victims' organizations, the image of an armed policeman continues to be associated with the serious human rights violations that they or their families faced, thus diminishing trust in the institution, which in turn reduces its effectiveness.

2. Trends Towards Remilitarization

The PNC is a fundamental institution in the process of maintaining the rule of law. As seen in the previous section, its creation and development were marked by the Peace Accords, and supported by the international community. Nevertheless, when examining matters of security, it is important to analyze the PNC as part of a wider security system where the legacy of the National Security Doctrine and the presence of military in decision making positions prevails in matters of security. Also, the incorporation of former policemen in the new PNC prevented a complete reform of the police and maintained militarized tendencies and connections between the PNC and military sectors. This continuum has been more evident in recent governments. In this section we will delve into the tendencies towards remilitarization, particularly starting with the government of Jimmy Morales (2016-2019) and its continuity in the government of Alejandro Giammattei. It first describes and explains these militarized tendencies, to then analyze them from a gender perspective, looking specifically at the relationship between militarization, violence, and masculinities.

2.1 Militarization Practices

As explained in the introduction, militarization not only refers to the perspective of security but to the institutionalization of military values and practices in post-conflict society and institutions. Some of the militarization practices in the PNC occur in everyday life, evidencing a normalization of the militarised vision of security. Others, such as the use of combined police and military forces, as well as states of siege or prevention, are used at specific moments. Both demonstrate an institutionalization of militarisation that clearly goes against the spirit of the Peace Accords, and which fosters a continuum of impunity.

Military control over the PNC

The PNC responds to the mandate of the Ministry of the Interior, and to the security policies defined by the National Security System⁸, implementing the operational aspects of security policy. The highest authority in security matters is the National Security Council CNS, led by the Technical Secretariat of the National Security Council -STCNS, and whose other members are the President, vice president, Minister of Defense, Minister of the Interior, Minister of External Affairs, Secretary of Strategic Intelligence of the State, and the General Attorney of the Nation. Since the creation of the CNS in 2009, ex-military or army officers participate in different positions, particularly in the Technical Secretariat, the General Inspectorate, and the Intelligence Institute. Currently the Coordinator of the STCNS is general Héctor Ernesto Orellana García.

Since the administration of Otto Pérez Molina, former members of the military have increasingly taken control over other security institutions by appointing military personnel in strategic positions in Ministry of the Interior, and over the PNC, including its criminal investigation entities, its anti-drugs bodies, and advisory positions. This has enabled these former military to use the PNC to maintain the militarized vision of the PNC, and to control its investigative functions. This process has continued during the term of government of Jimmy Morales (2016-2020) and Alejandro Giammattei (2020-2024).

⁸This includes the National Security Policy, the National Agenda of Risks and Threats, Strategic Agenda of Security of the Nation and the Security Plan of the Nation.

President Morales appointed former Minister of Defense and retired military Cámara Ronaldo Luis Deras as Inspector General of the National Security System (El Periódico, 18.12.18). The main advisor on security issues, ex-military Melgar Padilla, who had been Morales' security manager during his electoral campaign, had a strong influence too by appointing people close to him, like family members or classmates from military school (Promotions 101-103). For example, he appointed his friend and former promotion partner Jorge Ignacio López Jiménez as head of the Secretariat for Administrative and Security Affairs (SAAS), his brother Erick Melgar Padilla, also former military as Director of the Honour Guard, and others in institutions like the Marine, the Ministry of Defense, the General Inspector of the Army, Military School and the General Directorate of Private Security Services (DIGESSP) in the MINGOB (El Periódico, 22.02.16). President Alejandro Giammattei appointed two retired military officers in the Technical Secretariat STCNS, the general Eduardo Dedete Casprowitz and the mayor Gustavo Adolfo Díaz Lopez, who had developed the government's security plan and that of the Giammattei's political party Vamos.

During Morales' and Giammattei's administration there have been a total of six ministers of the interior, four of which have been conservative and promilitary. Morales appointed Francisco Rivas Lara, a career prosecutor and promotor of police reform, and Enrique Antonio Dagenhart Asturias, former Director General of Migration Services. Giammattei appointed retired general Edgar Godoy Samayoa, ex director of Intelligence and former chief of the Presidential General Military Staff (Estado Mayor Presidencial EMP) during the government of Serrano Elias.

The second minister was Oliverio García Rodas, a conservative right-wing lawyer and congressman for the parties GANA, Partido Patriota and Movimiento Reformador⁹. The third appointed Minister was Gendri Rocael Reyes Mazariegos, former agent in the Secretary of Administrative and Security Aspects SAAS, and vice minister with Dagenhart. The current minister is David Napoleón Barrientos Girón, retired Brigadier General.

Francisco Rivas Lara was appointed at the beginning of Morales' government period and remained in office from 2016 to 2018. His management showed a commitment to strengthening the security sector, particularly the PNC. He maintained the police leadership that existed upon his arrival and kept the Presidential Commission for Police Reform in operation. Experts on the matter describe that during Rivas Lara's administration there was direct coordination between the PNC management and the Minister of the Interior himself, and with the other institutions that interact with the PNC (EH18, EHMI6). Rivas Lara promoted policies with a citizen security approach and maintained good relations with the justice system, such as the Public Prosecutor's Office. Unfortunately, Rivas Lara presented his resignation after President Jimmy Morales declared Iván Velásquez Gómez, the head of the CICIG, as persona non grata. Although Rivas Lara aimed to fight impunity and strengthen civil power, the tensions between the CICIG and the Morales administration clearly reflected the government's undermining of democratic initiatives and the fight against impunity. Experts on security expressed their concern after Rivas's resignation and the possibility that the military would take total control over the MINGOB (Santos, 2017) (EH11, EHMI6, EMI2).

⁹García Rodas resigned after he had approved the operation of the organization Planned Parenthood, which president Giammattei opposed and revoked considering that it promoted abortion. (Associated Press, 2020)

In January 2018 Enrique Antonio Degenhart Asturias was appointed Minister of the Interior to replace Rivas Lara. Kamilo José Rivera, former PNC agent, took on the position of First Deputy Minister. An arrest warrant was issued against him nine months later for his alleged participation in a criminal group linked to extrajudicial executions that occurred in 2005. The management of Degenhart Asturias reflects various practices of militarized masculinity, combining an authoritarian, hierarchical and threatening leadership with the use of violence. Without major difficulties, he removed members of his portfolio and the PNC who were unwilling to follow his orders. There were massive dismissals in the high command of the PNC, a month after he took office (PL, 02.27.2018). According to interviews with key informants, these were commanders who did not want to follow illegal orders and orders which went against efforts to fight impunity.¹⁰ The institutional changes transcended beyond the police institution, and also affected institutional efforts to fight impunity. Furthermore, in July 2018, seven months after taking office, 20 out of the original 45 police agents collaborating with CICIG were transferred to police stations located in so-called red zones (El Periódico, 20.07.18).

These decisions reflect the change in the direction towards the increase of military control over the PNC by Minister Degenhart, following the wider political strategy implemented towards militarization by the government of Jimmy Morales in the CNS. The CNS played a decisive role undermining the CICIG, leading to the weakening of its work and its mandate not being renewed.

In 2018 the infantry colonel Guido Abdalla was advisor to the Director of the PNC and promoted the integration of soldiers in the PNC. (FOSS, s/f.) In 2019, the MINGOB had a total of 111 advisors (MINGOB, 2019) and in 2021 there continued to be more than 60 advisors. Some of them have been linked to corruption like Gendri Reyes (El Periódico, 30.11.20) or associated with military, like Hugo Ramiro Zaldaña Bustamante son of Hugo Ramiro Zeldaña Rojas who was convicted for the enforced disappearance of the child Antonio Molina Theissen, and others which are retired military like Mynor Francisco Mus Tujab and Jorge Antonio Ortega Gaytan¹¹.

At the same time, the Police was weakened institutionally, by not hiring more officers and transferring and changing officers between units. The students who completed the basic course at the Academy in 2018 were not able to enter the service, because of alleged budgetary problems (Centre for Citizen Security Observance, 2019: 3). Criminal investigation was weakened because 222 agents trained for this were transferred to fulfil operational functions in police stations (Ibid: 6). The Forum of Social Organizations Specialized in Security Issues (FOSS) states that the institution was going through an institutional crisis as a result of the systematic process of dismantling that was initiated by Degenhart. This included the dismissal and removal of more than one hundred professionals, some with 20 years of experience, without any justification, and the mentioned withdrawal of police agents to support the CICIG (FOSS, 2018: 2). Also, the Human Rights Ombudsman warned that during 2018 the government carried out a series of

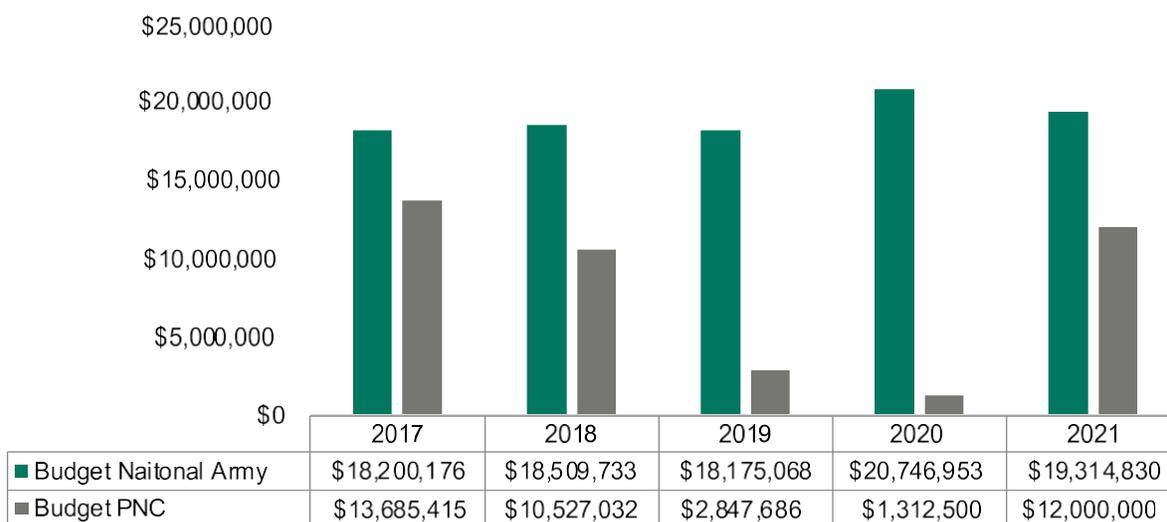
¹⁰The changes continued over the next few months. In August 2018, four deputy directors general were dismissed, Víctor Manuel Chocó, deputy director of personnel, Francisco Augusto Gómez Lacán, deputy director of support and logistics, Emma Delia Pérez García, deputy director of studies and doctrine, Armin López Osorio, deputy director of the department specialized in DEIC criminal investigation. Héctor Ochoa, Deputy Director General of Criminal Investigation (SGIC); José Tzuban, deputy director of Crime Prevention and deputy director of Operations, Manuel Salguero Godoy were also dismissed. Through ministerial agreement 2121-2018, Degenhart dismissed 15 members, including Tomás Alfonso Canto Camajá, head of the Specialized Division in Criminal Investigation (DEIC); Carlos Geovanny Espino García, inspector assigned to the same unit; Gilmar Noé González Pérez, curator of the General Sub Directorate for Anti-Drug Analysis and Information, among others (El Periódico, 18.12.18).

¹¹Official information published by the Ministry of the Interior. <https://uip.mingob.gob.gt/2-listado-de-asesores-despacho-superior/>

actions which undermined democratic security, such as dismissals of officials and professional senior officers of the PNC, which may affect the development of the police career (PDH, 2019: 55). At the same time, in 2018 the MINGOB announced the possibility of incorporating soldiers into the PNC, and in August 2018 published a note saying that former military members could enter the police after passing the corresponding evaluations (physical, medical, psychological, academic and reliability). Nevertheless, according to a report by the magazine ConCriterio a police officer stated that soldiers were joining the police without passing all requirements (Bin, 2018). The IACHR also reported that 136 police officers were promoted without completing the required courses (OACHR, 2019, p. 13).

As mentioned in the previous section, during 2019 and 2020 the basic course for new police members was suspended, as well as other training and educational schools. However, the army's educational budget was increased during these years, and particularly during the beginning of the COVID pandemic.

Figure 3. General Budget of Higher Education Command of the Army and General Sub Direction of Studies and Doctrine of the PNC in US Dollars 2017-2021



Source: SICOIN, Ministry of Finances. June 2021

The undermining of efforts to strengthen the police and combat impunity goes hand in and with militarization. For example, on 31 August 2018, the day when President Jimmy Morales announced that he would not renew the CICIG's mandate¹², 38 military vehicles donated by the United States to combat drug trafficking were used to surround the headquarters of the CICIG and the United States embassy, in a show of authoritarianism (Woltke, 2018). This excessive deployment of vehicles and weapons, suggesting the possibility of the use of violence at any time, as if dealing with the capture of a drug trafficker rather than accompany an UN-supported and internationally acclaimed corruption investigation commission, was symbolic of the militarized response by the government to the perceived threat of the CICIG against those accused of corruption in the State but also to actors linked to serious human rights crimes. All this has

¹²On January 8, 2019, through government agreement 2-2019, the president intended to terminate the agreement between the Government of Guatemala and the United Nations for the establishment and mandate of the CICIG. Minister of the Interior Degenhart Asturias, along with the rest of the ministers, signed to back the agreement.

generated an environment of uncertainty in the institution, which in turn is likely to reinforce tendencies of corruption and oppressive practices against the population.

In 2020, according to journalistic investigations, during Reyes Mazariegos administration of the MINGOB, five former military officers were hired: David Napoleón Barrientos Girón (current Minister of the Interior) Erick Bayardo López Domínguez, Albín Enrique Dubois Ramírez, Juan Randolpho Pardo Aguilar and Erik Enrique de León Lobos, some of them part of the 108 class of the polytechnic school (1984-1987) known as having no quality filters due to the urgency to graduate officials. (El Periódico, 2018).

Combined police and army forces

One of the clearest examples of the trend towards militarization is the use of combined forces of the police and the army. Although the Peace Agreement on strengthening civilian power and the role of the army in a democratic society determined the relocation and reduction of the elements of the army, the Law to support the Civil Security Forces (Decree 40-2000) of the Congress of the Republic supported the return of the army in relation to internal security activities. Such involvement in fact began to occur shortly after the signing of the Peace Accords; since 2000 operations of combined forces between the army and the police have taken place, making it difficult to promote their separation in action and ideology, which is one of the premises of SSR. Legislators considered army involvement important because of the rise of organized and common crime (Impunity Watch, 2016: 23). This showed a prevailing notion that military action and intelligence is better capable of combating organized crime than civilian intelligence.

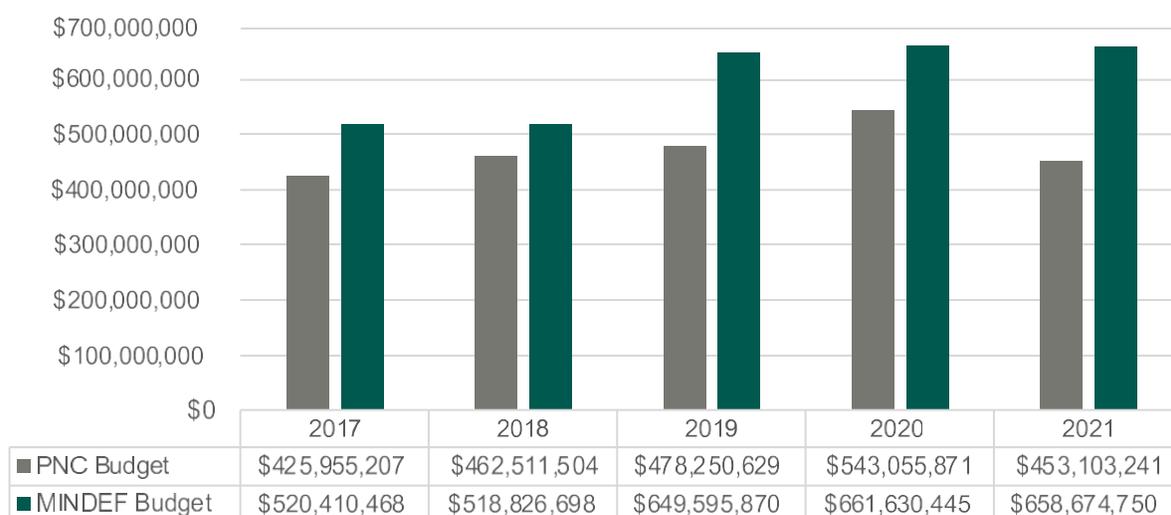
A former police officer explains how the use of combined forces places the police in a subordinate position to the army, weakening the police budget and therefore its position as an institution responsible for citizen security:

It has a negative influence. It is a waste of budget because the police must pay the army for these combined patrols. On the other hand, the army assumes command in the patrols, and they do not have the training to interact with the population. The policemen become more violent since the soldiers were trained to kill and torture (EHI5).

This comment shows how combined actions of the police and the army, and the resulting militarization of the police, negatively affect the way in which the PNC deals with the civilian population, instilling fear rather than trust.

The inclusion of the army in civilian security matters has been an argument used to increase the budget of the army. In the past years, the Ministry of Defense has had a bigger budget than the Police. Certainly, one is a Ministry and the other a Directorate, but it shows the hierarchy and higher budget placed on a militarized institution that should in theory be minimized after the signing of the peace accords.

Figure 4. General Budget PNC and Ministry of Defense in US Dollars 2017-2021



Source: SICOIN, Ministry of Finances. June 2021.

Serious human rights violations by the PNC

As seen in the previous section, the presence of CIACS in the security institutions has represented a serious problem for citizen security and is an example of the use of excessive violence by the police in selective cases connected to criminal activities. CIACS have committed serious human rights violations, mainly in the period 2004-2007. These groups emerged as parallel investigation groups within the MINGOB to combat the wave of kidnappings, gangs, and organized crime. However, in practice they became configured and functioned in parallel with the State investigation institutions, using the structures and resources of the State to commit crimes and human rights violations. There are several examples of these structures within the MINGOB and the PNC, clearly demonstrated by some cases that were successfully brought to court.

In the Gavilán case, which took place on October 22, 2005, 19 inmates escaped from the high security prison 'El Infiernito'. The MINGOB's Gavilán plan consisted of recapturing the escaped prisoners and then executing them. The official version of events however declared that the victims died during a confrontation with their captors. The executors were part of a criminal organization formed by the Ministry of the Interior and the PNC which were dedicated to extrajudicial executions against persons in prison. This structure carried out criminal activities including crimes of murder, drug trafficking, money laundering, kidnapping, extortion, and drug theft among others.

In the Pavón case, Minister of the Interior Vielmann launched a prison operation on September 25, 2006, in which seven inmates were extrajudicially executed. This operation was carried out by a parallel structure that included members of the General Directorate of the PNC and the General Directorate of the Penitentiary System. The crime scene was manipulated to look like a confrontation between inmates and law enforcement. Several high-ranking police officers were sentenced to between 13 and 33 years for this crime. In May 2015 Erwin Sperisen, former director of the PNC, was sentenced to life imprisonment for the death of the seven inmates of

Pavón by a court in Geneva, Switzerland, where he lived (El Periódico, 2017). Although the strongest examples of the presence of these structures correspond to the period prior to 2010, before the reform of the PNC was launched, the application of extrajudicial executions continued in later years, creating a sense of insecurity and lack of protection for most of the population, where the only beneficiaries are those who fear being persecuted and investigated by the courts for crime and corruption. These cases are also reminiscent of practices committed during the internal armed conflict.

States of siege and excessive use of violence

States of siege or emergency are generally used in conflict and other crisis situations. In Guatemala, these military states have been implemented in recent years as a mechanism to regain control of territories with the presence of drug trafficking and organized crime. For example, in December 2010 Álvaro Colom declared a state of siege in Alta Verapaz. In May 2012 Otto Pérez Molina declared a state of siege in Barillas, Huehuetenango. During the government of Jimmy Morales, three states of siege were declared, some of them extended in time and territories. The first one was declared in San Marcos in the municipalities of Ixchiguán and Tajumulco, due to territorial conflict and it was extended twice for a total of 90 days from May 10 to July 3, 2017 (Government Decrees 002-2017, 003-2017, 004-2017). In September 2019, Jimmy Morales decreed a state of siege for two months in 22 municipalities of the country in Izabal, Baja Verapaz, Zacapa, El Progreso, Alta Verapaz and Petén. The last state of siege of the Morales government was decreed after four soldiers were killed in the Semuy II village. Various sources however point out that this killing was in fact only an excuse for decreeing the state of siege, because its extension did even not include Semuy II. Likewise, the government did not prioritize the investigation of what happened to the soldiers but the seizure of drugs instead (García, 2019). Community organizations point out that what is behind the state of siege is not the fight against drug trafficking but rather the interest to gain territorial control for the cultivation of African palm. The conflict in this region has been historical due to the presence of African palm and the opposition of community organizations against this. This shows how the government increasingly uses militarized tactics to promote the economic interests of the country's elites.

The current government of Alejandro Giammattei began its term by decreeing states of prevention in different municipalities to exercise control over extortion. Although such mechanisms are meant to protect the population, in reality they have enabled strong deployments of military and police forces which have restricted the rights of the population, sometimes even leading to abuses against women, as will be described in the next section.

Evictions are often used to end demonstrations, clear land for the cultivation of crops, or as a response to historical land conflicts with indigenous people claiming land rights or labor rights that have not been complied with by the farm or company owners. They are often violent against civilian population who defend their territories from extractive companies. In such evictions there has been a tendency to deploy combined forces between the police, the army and the private security of companies or farmers, and a series of human rights violations have taken place, like extrajudicial executions and sexual violence. Some examples are the eviction of the Nueva Linda farm owned by the Spaniard Carlos Vidal Fernández Alejos (Guatemalan Congress, 2004, p. 2), in Retalhuleu in 2004, in which nine people died (five peasants and four policemen) (PDH, 2004a, p. 6). According to the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office report the deaths of the peasants showed indications of extrajudicial executions, and that the events that occurred during

the eviction showed other human rights violations such as torture, cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment, abuse of authority, obstruction of justice and violence against vulnerable population (PDH, 2004b, p. 96). The report also registered the arrival of a delegation of 80 soldiers who did not end up taking part of the eviction but had responded to the MINGOB's request for help (p. 78). A participant in one of the focus groups for this research shared that she participated in the eviction in Nueva Linda, and that having to witness so much violence and the deaths of civilians and fellow police agents was the hardest thing she had to face as a policewoman (GF1). According to Amnesty International, there continued to be attacks and violence from the landowners and police in the following years (2006, p. 34).

In 2007, at the request of the Guatemalan Nickel Company CGN, owned by the Canadian company Hubday Minerals, Q'eqchi' population in Lote Ocho in El Estor, Izabal were evicted with the participation of the private security of CGN, the PNC and army. There were only women and children in the community when the events took place, since the men were working elsewhere. During the eviction, tear gas was thrown, houses and stored corn burnt, food was stolen from the population and their belongings destroyed. (Mendez & Carrera, 2014, p. 77-80). Eleven women were raped, including pregnant women who later lost their babies (Mendez & Carrera, 2014, p. 80; Bolaños & Suarez, 2020). The women took the case to the Canadian justice system which has accepted their claim (Bolaños & Suarez, 2020). In 2019, plaintiff lawyers in this case filed documents in court that show that payments were made to military and police, as well as arrangements between local police and military (Friedman, 2019).

Other examples are what happened in 2012 in a region known as Alaska, Totonicapán, where around six thousand residents of the 48 cantons and its surroundings blocked the road, protesting high rates of electricity services and poor ENERGUATE¹³ service. Members of the army and police arrived to evict the population, attacking with tear gas and gun shots, killing eight community members. (Falla, 2012). There is also the case of the Samococh village between Coban and Chisec Alta Verapaz, in 2014, where a series of confrontations occurred in which a group of villagers blocked roads and occupied lands opposing the construction of a hydroelectric plant known as Santa Rita. 250 people were evicted by more than 600 policemen, who after throwing tear gas killed three people. In such operations, the police do not intervene to protect the population but rather act in alliance with the army and private security. These evictions are another example of the excessive use of force and violence by the police, instilling fear in the population and undermining the civilian ideology of the PNC whose mandate is to protect the population.¹⁴

During the government of Jimmy Morales, violent land evictions continued, even in spite of protective measures from the Interamerican Commission of Human Rights (IACHR). In 2017, in an agreement with the presidency, the PDH prioritized 43 communities at risk of forced evictions, but the State continuously tried to evict these populations, burning houses, crops or arresting the community leaders (PDH, 2017, p. 259). Some of these cases were Laguna Larga in Petén, Chab'íl Ch'och', Livingston, Izabal; La Cumbre, Tactic, Alta Verapaz and Barberena, Santa Rosa. None of these followed the protocol established to guarantee the human rights of the people evicted from the land (PDH, 2017, p. 409). In relation to the Laguna Larga case,

¹³ENERGUATE is an electric power generation company in 20 departments of the country.

¹⁴According to Amnesty International, 'In December 2005 the government of Guatemala registered 1,052 cases of agrarian disputes, in which land tenure is at the centre of the dispute' (2006: 1). This leads to violent evictions in those cases that implied the participation of the police institutions and the army, which caused deaths, injuries, material losses. These are serious violations of human rights.

President Morales stated that one of the objectives of his mandate was to recover ‘every inch of the country’ that has been usurped (La Vanguardia, 2017). The IACHR registered 27 forced evictions in 2017, five in 2018, but with 28 eviction orders in force (OHCHR, 2018, p. 18), while in 2019 ten of the 52 eviction orders were executed (OACHR, 2019, p. 16).

In 2017, the Union of Traditional Fishermen in Livingston, reported the spill on the lake by the nickel processing plant of the mining project Fenix. The response of the company was to deny that the contamination on the lake had been due to the mine and repressed the union, with the support of the government. In May of that year police agents killed a fisherman. The journalistic investigation “Mining Secrets”, based on filtered documents from the transnational Russian – Swiss mine Solway Investment Group, partner, and stockholder of the Guatemalan Nickel Company (CGN) since 2011, revealed the plans to repress opposing people and groups, including monetary transfers to the police (Prensa Comunitaria, 2022).

In 2020, with a newly elected president and new authorities in the MINGOB, forced evictions became highly violent again, causing deaths in addition to other human rights violations. According to the Evictions Protocol (MINGOB, 2020) the police is not supposed to carry weapons, there must be a court order for the eviction and a dialogue with the community leaders should be established. During the COVID pandemic evictions were suspended for a while and other health measures were implemented, like the use of face masks, and the maintenance of distance which implied that police could not touch members of the community. However, the IACHR reported two illegal and violent evictions (OACHR, 2021, p. 16-17), and the PDH registered five violent evictions (PDH, 2020, p. 60). In the forced eviction in Chinebal, El Estor, Izabal on October 31, 2020, one community member was killed, and three policemen wounded (DW, 2020). Community based reporters registered more than 20 evictions in the first four months of 2020, in the north and south of the country (Alta Verapaz, Baja Verapaz, Izabal, Petén, Escuintla, Suchitepéquez and Santa Rosa) (Salvadó, 2020). These regions are the highest in natural resources.

The Agricultural Chamber (Cámara del Agro) issued a statement in support of the States of Siege declared by Giammattei in regions with land conflict and states, and requesting pending evictions be completed:

for years, we have been denouncing to the authorities and public opinion the ungovernable conditions and the existence of structures of criminal groups that operate with total impunity, violating private property and threatening the life and safety of the inhabitants of the entire region. Driving away investment, causing unemployment, and generating more poverty (Quino, 2020).

They requested the pending land evictions to take place. The vision of the Chamber of Agriculture, which regards peasants and indigenous peoples as ‘criminal groups’, reinforces the militarized idea of an internal enemy that the police need to attack in order to protect the economic interests and property of the elite.

These states of siege and evictions tend to go hand in hand with the use of excessive force and violence. Militarization tends to lead to the legitimization of violence within and outside of war (MacKenzie, 2012). In the years 2004-2007, it became evident that the PNC response became much more violent than in previous periods, particularly evident in the extrajudicial executions in

the prison system, described already. Likewise, during the land evictions they act with excessive use of violence against the civilian population, mainly of indigenous background. Furthermore, since 2018 police presence increased significantly compared with previous years at presidential events or around Congress during plenary sessions, at times when regressive human rights laws were addressed. Such presence is often accompanied by the show of weapons and arms, giving the impression of a militarized police which is prone to use violence rather than de-escalation or conflict resolution techniques. The carrying of arms is symbolic in the militarization of the police. Although the PNC is an armed institution, not all police officers need to use arms, for example in prevention work. Nevertheless, weapons form a standard part of the uniform. In some focus groups participants clearly explained that the only use of the pistol was to kill, and that for this reason it was important to know how to use it. Other participants stated that it was necessary to increase knowledge about the use of weapons, through more weapons practices. Although several participants explain that the weapon is an emergency resource, it also has a utility to exert control and instill fear in the population. In armed groups and security forces, weapons represent a connection between violence and aggression on the one hand, and men and masculinity on the other (Baird, 2015; Flisi, 2016).

During the government of Giammattei police brutality increasingly exacerbated, demonstrated by the protests that occurred during the week of November 17-21, 2020. Taking advantage of the COVID pandemic restrictions, Congress had been discussing and trying to pass laws and reforms for their benefit and regressive for human rights, particularly in terms of efforts to create a new institution to control access to public information. After Congress approved the 2021 budget on the night of November 17, which reduced the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office budget and \$US6.5 million to combat malnutrition while increasing Congress members' per diem meeting quota, a series of peaceful demonstrations began and reached their peak on November 21, when the police responded to a peaceful demonstration with pepper gas, rubber bullets and excessive security and riot cords (Rodriguez, 2020). The timeline of these demonstrations and the response from government and the police exemplify the tendency to resort to violent and repressive means.



Photo: Surizar on VisualHunt

Timeline Police violence during the November 2020 demonstrations

- November 17**  Human Rights Ombudsman leaves a wreath as a symbolic act of mourning for the regression of human rights. Congress approves the 2021 national budget.
- November 18**  First day of peaceful demonstrations in front of Congress, called by the Association of University Students (AEU) from the national university of San Carlos and different social organizations.
- November 19**  From dawn, Congress is surrounded by police. Demonstrations begin peacefully, some tires are burnt, and police represses the demonstration with riot forces. The president reaffirms his support for the 2021 budget, swears Gendri Reyes in as Minister of the Interior and retired Colonel Carlos Enrique Franco Úrzua is appointed as Vice Minister. Reyes had been Vice Minister under Degenhart.
- November 20**  AEU and Landivarianos¹⁵ call for peaceful demonstrations nationwide on the 21st.
- November 21**  Congress, the National Palace and Presidential House are surrounded by several security cordons.

The main plaza in Guatemala City, as well as plazas in other departments, are full of peaceful demonstrators of all ages. There are also demonstrators in front of Congress and the Chamber of Commerce. At 2:25pm a window in Congress is on fire, which incites the demonstrators, and surrounding police does not react. Riot forces arrive after 15 minutes and through tear gas start detaining people, hitting, beating, pushing, pulling and dragging demonstrators and journalists, including women and the indigenous Maya Kaqchikel communicator Nanci Sinto. The demonstrations in the Central Plaza continue peacefully, until 4:40 when riot forces throw tear gas bombs in the plaza to disperse people. Bombs are continuously thrown for half an hour in the plaza and exiting streets. Some of the demonstrators form a cord on seventh avenue to block the police and are able to push them out. But this confrontation is violent and incites both demonstrators and police. Two civilians, Keneth López and Carlos Manuel González, lost an eye during these events, and people who were detained spent the weekend in jail. They were later released due to the lack of evidence of the commission of a crime.

A year later, Nanci Sinto and the sculptor Juan Francisco Monroy Gómez were detained and charged with the crime of depredation of cultural property. Five police officers, three women and two men, were also charged with crime simulation and abuse of power.

Sources: (Oliva, 2020) (Rodríguez, 2020) (García, 2020) (Marroquín y Pitán, 2021) (García y Hernández, 2022)

¹⁵University students from the private university Rafael Landivar.

According to an article by No-Ficción, the PNC reported that that day 388 tear gas bombs were thrown. During the three months previous to the protests, the MINGOB paid Tactical Group, Limited Company, 6.3 million US\$ to buy 600 propellant cartridges, 17,000 tear gas cartridges, 500 launchers, 202 anti-trauma kits, and 5,800 smoke cartridges (García y Hernández, 2022). In 2022, the MINGOB invested 134,651 US\$ in riot helmets and anti-trauma gear for the police.¹⁶

Another symbolic element is the use of the uniform. During operations on the street, such as at protests, in checkpoints, raids, and actions by riot police, agents use a completely black uniform, with pants and a black long-sleeved shirt. In the focus groups, several participants explained that this uniform was created specifically to intimidate and generate fear in the population. This is a symbolic element that operates in the imaginary of the population and connects the street police with militarized practices. There are other uniforms too, which are used depending on the function to be performed. For example, the so-called ‘pearl grey’ uniform consists of black pants and a short-sleeved pearl-gray shirt. In the focus groups, it was explained that this uniform is meant to give a ‘softer’ view of the police and is used in the office and in prevention work, to generate greater confidence among the population. Policewomen however indicated that the uniform is not comfortable for them, and suitable designs should be made for them. Furthermore, the use of the intimidating black uniform rather than the pearl grey uniform when dealing with peaceful protests, suggests that the police’s attitude is one of a militarized response rather than one of seeking to de-escalate and peacefully resolve conflicts.

It is important to mention however that the PNC has not always used violence and that efforts to implement a community policing model have diminished the violent response. However, during the governments of Morales and Giammattei the tendency in using violence has been increasing.

2.2 Militarized Masculinities

As described in the introduction, masculinities are the result of a social, cultural, and political construction. They describe which behavior is considered to be masculine and attached to masculine status and power. In the case of hierarchical military institutions and other security institutions or groups, such as the police and private security agencies, violent masculinities are often exacerbated because their members are armed and trained to attack and use violence to gain and maintain control over others. This process promotes an aggressive and misogynistic form of masculinity (Theidon, 2009). The police, being a highly hierarchical and authoritarian institution, internalize values associated with masculinities and masculine power, which encourage certain behaviors and practices. The valuing of masculinity as an ideal model of behavior does not only apply to men, but to all those in the institution aspiring to power and status. Therefore, women within the institution who want to reach leadership positions must assimilate and follow the model of militarized masculinity to be perceived as equals and gain the status associated with masculinity. That is why it is not enough to promote the integration of more women in these institutions, but it is even more important to change the security model and the preferred model of masculinity (Duncanson and Woodward, 2016).

This research identified a number of elements of hegemonic and oppressive masculinities within the PNC, in addition to the use of weapons, the exercise of violence and aggressive and misogynistic behavior. One of the characteristics of hegemonic masculinities that is clearly

¹⁶GUATECOMPRAS. <https://bit.ly/3aL01G0>

valued within the PNC, apart from the use of force and violence described in the first part of this section, is the demonstration of active heterosexuality. For example, there is a general recognition of the custom of policemen to have two families, one in their place of origin or where they live and the other where they work (E12MEP), or having several girlfriends (GF5), thus showing their exalted virility and ability of heterosexual conquests (Baird, 2015). Even when talking about the addictions that police officers have, in various focus groups, they jokingly mentioned women. The emphasis on heterosexual activity is also commonly demonstrated in a strong sense of homophobia (Jones, 2006). In the PNC, those not adapting to the norm of exaggerated heterosexual activity are pressured or questioned about their sexuality.

Certain codes are handled. Within those, someone who rejects [a woman] who, as they say, has thrown the bait or a woman who wants something with them, that is frowned upon by the colleagues. They will say ‘you’re gay... *hacele ganas*¹⁷, you embarrass me as a man’. You have to be part of that group or else you will be rejected or made fun of (E13MA).

In this way, men constantly have to prove their masculinity through male-affirming practices. In the PNC there have been some workshops to address women’s rights, dominant masculinities and the importance of men changing some of their attitudes and practices, but there is little understanding of what those changes mean and there is much resistance. Police agents generally associate the term masculinities with sexuality and the promotion of homosexuality, which they see as the opposite of masculinity, rather than the construction of gendered power relations and inequalities that the notion of dominant masculinity implies. A police officer who participated in promoting these discussions explained: ‘many men do not take the concept of new masculinities seriously, they say “I am not gay”’ (GF1). Another police officer explained that he agreed with the rights of women, ‘but not with wanting to change men, I would not like to see my institution damaged by these things’ (GF1). The idea that men can be masculine without performing the often-harmful masculine characteristics of domination over women and being tough and not showing emotion, is not shared widely among members of the PNC.

Nevertheless, there are men and women with a different, non-heterosexual identity within the police. Some are more open than others, but they constantly face harassment. Participants in one of the focus groups shared the situation of ‘a gay colleague [who] hangs out more with women and they want to send him to sleep in the women’s block’ (GF7). A transsexual man describes that ‘they have tried to rape me, so that I stop being who I am. In the rooms, the women don’t want me to stay with me, but if I stay with the men, they are likely to rape me’ (E17HG). The strongly masculinized environment of the PNC, where homophobia is strong, provides no safe environment for those identifying with a different sexual identity. It is likely that people with a different gender identity within the general population do not receive adequate treatment and protection by the PNC either.

Another characteristic of masculinity which is valued in the PNC is strength and physical performance. From the entrance into the PNC, there is a strong focus on physical training, to form ‘strong and enduring’ agents. One of the oldest policemen described the difficulty of the training:

¹⁷This is a slang expression to find the will or desire to finish something you may not necessarily want, or to support a cause that might be difficult.

They use practices of the police and the army to remove empathy with the people and to be able to act like evil, it was like a concentration camp. For example, they made us run, pass obstacles while they threw tear gas at us, they threw dirt at us, we had to go through places with barbed wire, and in the end, they pushed us into wells where there were dead dogs, toads. Because of these things, many women refused this and preferred to withdraw. For example, if 70 entered, 30 would stay until the end (EH15).

In interviews, several women expressed difficulty with physical training, exhaustion from excessive exercise, discipline, and a totally vertical authority. They gave examples of the strenuous exercises and cruel and degrading treatment to which they were subjected with the idea of strengthening them physically and improving their performance. There is a recognition that, to be a good or respected police officer, attitudes or values considered as masculine are needed, both for women and men.

If one is not vulgar, if one is not strong, if one does not have a loud voice like that of a man and they shout like that [...] then one does not have the profile for a policeman, they have no character. [As a woman] one has to be vulgar, abusive, rude, strong, (...) loud, bossy, arrogant (E14MA).

To be accepted as equals, women thus need to show that they can endure the same physical and emotional challenges as men. The use of the uniform creates a police identity, but also a homogeneity that limits the conformation of diverse subjects. Equality thus becomes sameness, which forces women to adapt to dominant masculine and militarized norms (Gonzales Vaillant et al., 2012; Duncanson and Woodward, 2016). This means that even with women in its ranks, the police keep being a masculine institution. This is not only hard for the women inside the institution; these masculine values of toughness and a lack of empathy do not facilitate the creation of trust towards the population either, and thus in fact make the police's job of preventing crime and violence harder as people feel a lack of trust and are therefore less likely to report crime to the police. True gender equality, in contrast, would entail an equal treatment which recognizes the differences between men and women. This not only means valuing masculine characteristics such as physical strength, but also the benefits of those values considered as feminine in terms of empathy and communication, which are essential for civilian police which instils trust in the population.

The ways in which behavior is reproduced, promoted and rewarded are rarely questioned. This is related to the cultural norms and values in the institution. Hierarchy and discipline are values formally recognized in the PNC Law: 'it is an armed professional institution, oblivious to all political activity. Its organization is hierarchical in nature and its operation is governed by the strictest discipline' (Decree number 11-97: article 3). Both characteristics establish a structured and formal power relationship, in which relationships of superiority and subordination are clearly defined. The PNC Law establishes respect for the hierarchy as a value and penalizes a lack of respect for managers, who are predominantly men, as was described in the previous section. When the expected routine is not followed, when the uniforms are not clean and tidy, when there is no discipline, agents are punished. The differentiated language between respect for commanders and mistreatment and punishment of colleagues reinforces a hierarchical vision of

greater respect for some but not for all members of the police. For the students of the Academy the punishments are disproportionate; for example, the most common punishment is to prevent them from returning home and reuniting with their family. Other punishments that are implemented in the police stations are transfers or assignment of difficult jobs. In this hierarchical structure, the superior commanders have the power so that the agents and lower ranks obey them and follow their every order. The severe sanctions prevent agents who do not agree with some practices within the PNC from denouncing or questioning these. This is likely to be even stronger for women, who face additional barriers to be accepted as women in a masculine environment, and frequently face harassment, as the next section describes. This creates an atmosphere where critical thinking and open discussions are discouraged, thus facilitating abuses of power and violence, both within the institution and towards the population.

3. How Militarization of Police Impacts Women and Society

This section describes the direct impacts this has on the lives of women. In the first place, it prevents the possibility of women being able to integrate freely and equally into the police institution with the security that their rights will be respected. Second, it generates fear and mistrust in women in wider society, who often feel harassed or intimidated by heavily armed policemen. This problem is even more serious in post-conflict societies where the military who committed serious human rights violations, including sexual violence against women, have not been tried, making these war crimes generally go unpunished. This section thus shows that the little participation of women in the definition of security strategies, and the lack of preventive strategies in general, means that there has not been a true transformation of the PNC towards a perspective of citizen security.

3.1 Women in the PNC

Analyzing the situation of women in the PNC allows us to see some of the gendered aspects of discourses, practices and organization within the institution, since historically it has been women who have faced the greatest inequalities, which sometimes constitute forms of violence against them. Violence and discrimination are the result of a hierarchical and unequal system in an institution or a society, including structures such as patriarchy and racism, which maintain power relations of oppression of one person or group of persons over the other (González and Paredes, 2013). These unequal relationships and abuses of power occur in diverse contexts, including the economic and political sphere, and can take personal, family and collective dimensions (García, 2012: 18). As described in the previous section, the PNC is organized through a system of strong discipline and hierarchy, characterized by masculine norms and expectations of behavior. An atmosphere of hierarchy, discipline and the need to constantly prove one's worth as a policeman or woman creates an environment which facilitates violence, either inside the institution or towards citizens.

In the interviews and focus groups, participants were cautious in talking about violence or sexual harassment within the PNC. However, it is a problem that exists and is not addressed. All the women interviewed stated that they had experienced some form of discrimination because they



Photo: Diario de Centroamérica

were women.¹⁸ Likewise, most of the men recognized that within the institution there are practices of discrimination against women. Sexual harassment is an even more complicated topic to address. It is an open secret within the PNC. According to international instruments ratified by the State of Guatemala, such as the Inter-American 'Belem Do Para' Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence against Women, sexual harassment is a form of violence against women that occurs in a work environment (1998: art 2). The International Labor Organization defines it as 'any behavior - physical or verbal - of a sexual nature that has the purpose or produces the effect of undermining the dignity of a person; in particular, when an intimidating, degrading or offensive work environment is created' (2014:

15). It is therefore a workplace harassment, but as commonly happens in attacks against or harassment of women, it usually has a sexual character and content.

In all the focus groups, when sexual harassment was addressed, there was a long moment of silence. In the interviews, most women said they had not experienced any type of harassment, although in many cases they felt discomfort to address it. However, in the women-only focus groups, women gradually recounted their experiences of sexual harassment, whereas in the interviews, some women reported experiences of bullying throughout their careers. This shows the importance of creating a relationship of safety and trust in interviews, in order to address sensitive topics.

¹⁸In two interviews, when asked directly if they had ever been discriminated against, policewomen answered no. However, in the course of the interview, they expressed the devaluation they have felt from their colleagues or managers, considering them incapable of performing certain tasks because they are women.

A common element of most of the cases discussed by participants in this research is that the aggressors are men, mainly senior managers. These managers exercise power and coercion over their victims, who are threatened or sanctioned with a greater workload or with transfers, especially when they report the harassment, as is reflected in the examples below. A policewoman who has been in service for 19 years has suffered violence, sexual and workplace harassment from the beginning of her work in the police force. She says that, from entering the academy, she wanted to resign due to the sexual harassment she suffered from instructors: 'Even a commander tried to rape me when I had recently finished the course, thank God I have been a person with a lot of character, and I did not allow it' (E13MA). After this she went to the Public Prosecutor's Office and filed a complaint for violence against women. She was very afraid: 'I filed a complaint [...] I was fed up with so much to be honest, so it was about eight years ago that I finally went, because it scared me, it caused me a terrible fear because he was a very superior commander, they were deputy directors, they were commissioners' (E13MA). Unfortunately, her complaint was not processed, according to her because it was mishandled. After having presented the complaint, she was sanctioned for being absent from her work and was forbidden to continue her studies at the university. 'Even the lawyer told me that beyond being unfair, this is inhumane' (E13MA). The type of sanction imposed on her is serious, as it prevents her from studying and applying for promotions. She explains: 'it was the Division chief who was carrying out the harassment at that time, [and] the general deputy director of operations under whom I served. And the deputy director was the one who ordered that disciplinary procedure' (E13MA). This shows the complicity of management in either committing or abetting harassment against women, creating an environment which instills fear, unsafety and reluctance to report.

Another police officer who is now an inspector, and has been in the PNC for 14 years, recounted how when she was an agent, she faced more harassment: she recounted how her boss tried to be generous with her, but she felt he had other motives. He kept inviting her to eat or tried to give her things. She felt so harassed that after being there for only four months she wanted to leave. He kept telling his colleagues that there was something going on between them even though she had never agreed to anything. He would pressure by calling her at the office, and if she did not answer the call, whoever answered would say "he says you're his girlfriend and wants to talk to you" involving colleagues in the pressure (E11MEP).

In these situations, the bosses use their power to assign their victims to posts close to them and create circles of support or cronyism between men to protect themselves and create an unsafe and unsupportive environment for women – a mechanisms of control which is characteristic of dominant masculinities. This policewoman gives additional examples of the harassment:

On one occasion he gave money to the boss to transfer me to the place where he was (...) I told the boss no, and no, and no. On three occasions he tried to transfer me to the place where he was, because he was very upset because I ignored him (...) on one occasion he told a colleague to be careful, because no woman despised him, and that I didn't know who he was, and [...] he said that he was going to break me. It was a terrible harassment (E11MEP).

In 2019, the PDH had four complaints of policewomen who were victims of violence against women, five for 2017, one in 2016 and five in 2015.¹⁹ Between 2020 and 2021 the Public Prosecutors office registered a total of 131 complaints by policewomen for crimes of violence against women included in the Law on Femicide and Other Forms of Violence Against Women (Decree 22-2008).

Table 8. Complaints ff Policewomen Before the Prosecutors Office 2020 – 2021

Crime	Total
Violence against women	131
Psychological	55
Physical	28
Financial	2
Sexual	2
Not registered	44

Source: Public Prosecutor’s Office (Request No. UIP 2019-002090).

According to official information, the Inspectors Office received 0 claims for sexual harassment in 2020, and 8 claims against male police officers in 2021. A report by Agencia Ocote/Nómada reflects the inconsistencies in the recording of these events: in a first request for information, the Inspector’s Office reported that there were 61 complaints of sexual harassment between 2014 and 2019, but in a second request they responded that for that same period there were only 41 complaints, and only one sanction in 18 years (Quintela, 2019: parr 35).

In the Disciplinary Regulations of the PNC, Governmental Agreement Number 420-2003, sexual harassment is included as a serious offence: ‘To insinuate or frequently harass subordinate personnel or those who are in their custody with proposals of a sexual nature’, whereas it is treated as a very serious offence if there is recidivism (Art. 20 and 22). Possible sanctions for a serious offence are: ‘Suspension from work for nine to twenty calendar days without pay; Temporary limitation of six to twelve months to qualify for promotions, participate in specialization courses and scholarships inside or outside the country; Temporary limitation from six to twelve months to apply for positions in the Institution’ (Art. 21). For a very serious offence, the penalties are even higher, including possible dismissal.

Most women know that harassment is an infraction within the PNC and that it can be reported to the MP. Nevertheless, fear of reporting prevails, because most cases involve higher-level managers who harass subordinate officers, who fear being threatened or punished by being transferred to other places or even losing their jobs when denouncing it. On the other hand, many women are reluctant to report because they do not believe that there will be an adequate response from the institution. They believe that the process of investigating these cases is ineffective: either nothing happens or, as is common to reports of violence against women, women are the ones being questioned for having done something to provoke the harassment, or their cases are questioned for being false reports. According to the before mentioned report, this view that the complaints are false persists even within the General Inspectorate: ‘we could say [that there is] harassment, but in most of these cases it is possible to determine that it is not harassment but related to other work situations that occur’ (Quintela, 2019: parr 38). The

Inspector General receives complaints, and a disciplinary court determines whether there was an infringement or not. In 2021, five police agents were sanctioned for sexual harassment. It is significant that 5 out of 8 were sanctioned (62.5%), even though there is still under reporting. As the above quote shows, some women have been sanctioned for raising complaints about harassment. The Gender Equality Policy establishes the ‘Strengthening of the PNC disciplinary tribunals by modifying the regulations to incorporate specialized procedures for the case of complaints of female police personnel for sexual harassment’ (2014: 53). However, as described in the first section, the implementation of this policy has stalled.

Interviewees also reported the lack of support from other colleagues as an obstacle to filing a complaint:

‘If you go against that system, you are lost, because that is what is going to happen to you’, that was the message that I was able to perceive at that moment and the saddest thing still is that the same female colleagues were the ones who pointed and said ‘Oh, that can’t be true, I’ve never been harassed, it’s outrageous she is saying things that aren’t real, this chief is very good, etc.’ (E13MA).

The challenges that women face for being accepted and integrated in the PNC thus weaken their mutual solidarity, as they do not want to lose the position of acceptance they have struggled to obtain. Rather than supporting female colleagues in denouncing a masculine and misogynist system which facilitates gendered abuse and violence, they point to individual responsibility for incidental cases, which occur when women do not conform to the dominant norms and values in the institution.

One interviewed agent persevered with her case and went to the Public Prosecutor’s Office which told her to re-initiate her case through a supervision office: ‘The prosecutor called me and told me [...] ‘there are aggravating circumstances [due to] the fact that they are sanctioning you after you filed a complaint [...] We are going to pass the case to a court’. This made me understand that there was a probability that an arrest warrant would be issued...’ (E13MA). After this, she started receiving threats, including against her parents, which made her decide to desist. The MP’s records in fact reflect a decrease in complaints every year. In 2015 there were 101 complaints, in 2016 there were 84, in 2017 there were 76 and in 2018 there was a slight increase to 79 complaints. By not giving an agile and prompt response to lawsuits for violence against women, justice institutions feed the continuum of violence. This also diminishes the trust in the justice system on the part of the State employees. On the other hand, some of the examples above show how cronyism or influence peddling occurs between institutions by not following up on certain complaints.

The misogyny that prevails within the PNC normalizes and naturalises sexual harassment. In focus groups, some men said that they did not deny that harassment existed, but that women often reported this to attack or discredit men (GF1). Others implied that some action or attitude of the women had caused it (GF4). A student from the ACPNC explains how police agents from their training onwards receive the message that they should not denounce or challenge the commanders:

There was an inspector, who about two, three times told me the worst things, he harassed me, supposedly he wanted me to fall in love with him [...] Once I was kneeling on the ground, planting a flower, and he told me ‘stay like that, I love to see you in that position’. I felt a repudiation, an anger because he is an old man and I told him ‘look inspector this is disrespectful’. I got up and he said ‘don’t challenge me, if you are that insubordinate here, how are things going to be on the street? By God I’m going to make sure you don’t graduate if you continue like this, because you women make great demands and problems on the street. Learn to behave here, little girl’ (E14MA).

In interviews and focus groups it could be perceived that most participants did not see this as a problem that the institution should pay more attention to, but rather as ‘relationship problems’ between police agents. As is common in cases of gender-based violence, it is thus seen as a private problem rather than a public issue that requires a public response. Since the PNC is one of the first institutions that intervenes in acts of violence against women, and refers these cases to the MP or OJ, it is essential to change the perception of violence and harassment against women from a minor into a serious problem. Women themselves and the solidarity among them are crucial for this. For example, the officer who desisted with her own complaint has instead supported other cases of young people; they have been brought to justice and are currently pending debate. Nevertheless, a more institutionalized effort is needed to recognize the problem of sexual harassment and gendered discrimination within the PNC, and to strengthen the internal reporting culture and the institutional processes to investigate and resolve cases adequately. Also, the inclusion of more women in top leadership positions, their sensitization in gender issues including gendered power relations and gender-based violence, is an important step for this. In addition, both male and female leadership must make a public and outspoken declaration of their commitment to combat gender-based violence in the PNC. This will help to give women – and men – within the PNC role models to follow and give them a feeling of moral support in the face of misogyny and harassment, thus reducing obstacles for women to report.

3.2 Impact of Militarized Masculinity on the Lives of Women

The continuity of militarization in post-conflict societies impacts the general population. The populations most affected by the armed conflict in Guatemala connect the current violent practices of the PNC with the serious human rights violations faced in the past, thus reinstalling fear for the security services. Also, other populations in marginalized conditions may be victims of militarization due to the exercise of violence against them, resulting from racism and misogyny. The way women and men participate in security processes and the way they are affected is different. Violence in Guatemala has a specific impact on women and girls, whether they experience it in their work environment, as women officers of the PNC, or as Guatemalan citizens. Like violence in general, which is a tool of control and power, violence against women and girls is exerted against them because of their condition of being women or girls, because of the inferiority assigned to women within the patriarchal system. This means that women often experience the militarized practices and corresponding violence exercised by the PNC in an exacerbated way. In addition, women frequently face sexual violence. During the armed conflict,

sexual violence was used to attack and control the population and generate fear in women. This was demonstrated in the trials of the Ixil Genocide, Sepur Zarco and the Achi Women's case. Practices of sexual violence and intimidation continue to exist in the post-conflict period, albeit not in entirely the same systematic manner. This is the result of the legitimization of the use of violence in post-conflict situations that militarization produces. Also in other contexts, militarization has led to a higher frequency of domestic and sexual violence, as a continuation of the conflict-era use of rape in the post-conflict context (Enloe, cited in MacKenzie, 2012). In IW's monitoring report on the implementation of Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, a survey administered to women about their perceptions of security determined that 97% of them believe Guatemala is an unsafe place for women and girls. It also revealed that out of the state institutions involved in dealing with security and violence against women, the police is the institution they trust the least, with only 3% of women (Impunity Watch, 2020, p. 39-41).

In recent years, police, military and private security agents have raped women with impunity, without any investigations being carried out within the police or the army. In the post-conflict situation in Guatemala, conflicts have continued in different municipalities, particularly consisting of land conflicts between the local population, farmers and transnational companies, over the extraction of natural resources. Conflicts mainly occur in territories rich in minerals which are ancestral lands of the indigenous population. Due to their worldview, their relationship with the land and ancestral property rights, indigenous peoples organize to resist the expropriation and eviction of their lands. The main strategy used by the government, often at the request of farmers or business owners, is to deploy evictions without trying to solve community problems through dialogue. As explained in the second section, evictions are often extremely militarized and violent, usually carried out in coordination between the army, the police and private security companies, using excessive violence resulting in injured people, extrajudicial executions, burning and destruction of community property and in some cases sexual violence.

A clear example of the use of sexual violence was the eviction of Lote Ocho in El Polochic, El Estor Izabal in 2007, where 11 women were tied, beaten and gang raped in front of their children (Mendez & Carrera, 2014, p. 80) (Friedman, 2019). The Canadian company Hudbay Minerals Inc., owner of the land where the events took place, is facing a lawsuit in Canada, bearing responsibility for rape and other human rights abuses committed to the villagers, along with police and military (Friedman, 2019). The use of sexual violence as a mechanism of torture and repression in these contexts has a direct impact on women, and on the morality of the community. As Rita Segato (2016) has explained, the use of sexual violence has a double intention: while it places women in a situation of vulnerability by appropriating women's bodies, it also sends a message to the community, in this case to discourage the resistance of indigenous peoples and their struggle for territory.

Women's lives are also impacted by the involvement of the police with organised crime. This sector is not only dedicated to drug trafficking but also to human trafficking and sexual exploitation. A CICIG report on trafficking and sexual exploitation states that drug trafficking is also regularly dedicated to the transfer of migrants, and labor and sexual trafficking of people: 'experts in organised crime affirm that it is impossible for the sexual exploitation of girls, boys, adolescents, foreigners and other victims of trafficking to take place without the assistance of state authorities and, especially, police and municipal authorities. [...] According to confidential interviews, some groups of police officers would be dedicating themselves directly to the trafficking business,

would be owners, through front men, of several centers of sexual exploitation, and would launder their profits through investment in transportation and taxis” (CICIG, 2016, p. 92).

In another report, a prostitution ring is mentioned as part of the crimes committed by the police, indicating that even some policewomen were prostitutes (El Periódico, 2014). Another example of police directly presenting a risk to women’s safety is what happened at the “Virgen de la Asunción” Safe Home in March 2017, when 41 girls were burned to death. On March 7th, some of the girls and adolescents began protesting the poor living conditions in the home and the violence and bad treatment they were receiving. They were joined by the boys in the adjacent “San Gabriel” home, and 100 of them escaped. Police detained most of them and brought them back to the home. (López, 2017) (OACNUDH, 2018). According to the OHCHR report, the boys and girls were kept outside the home in police custody for about nine hours, some of them barefoot, wet and with nothing to warm them up (p. 21). Around midnight the police locked up the boys in the auditorium and the girls were locked up in a much smaller room with no bathroom (p. 22). The girls were searched by police before

they were placed in the room, touching them, searching their shirts and bras (p. 23). They were guarded by 40 police officers and only the police sub inspector had the key. There were 23 mats they had to share, no blankets or pillows. They were never allowed to go to the bathroom all night, leaving them with no other option than to relieve themselves in the room. Breakfast was brought to them, but the room was never cleaned. At some point some girls were allowed to go to the bathroom but they stopped taking them since there was no running water. The girls started complaining that they were cold and wanted to clean themselves and the room, but no one responded to their needs. On the morning of March 8, it is believed one of the girls set a mattress on fire to get their attention and force the police to let them out, however the police waited about nine minutes before unlocking the door and did not allow the firefighters to enter right away, who were only able to reach the fire approximately 40 minutes later, unable to save most girls (p. 24-25). There are complaints that the girls in the home and other homes were victims of sexual violence, which they unsuccessfully tried to report, the precautionary measures issued by the IACHR states that there are:

multiple factors that would generate a situation of risk for the children and adolescents who would be in the Home. Such factors include: i) the overcrowding situation, which is close to 200% of the Center’s capacity; ii) poor housing and security conditions that have led to recurrent flight of children and adolescents; iii) the acts of violence verified between children and adolescents that would include sexual violence and strangulation; iv) acts of violence as a result of “mistreatment” carried out by “monitors” and confrontations between security forces and children and adolescents in attempts to escape; v) the possible existence of a network of trafficking in children and adolescents (IACHR, 2017, p. 5).

These different examples clearly show the lack of respect that is demonstrated by some police agents for the bodily integrity and basic human rights of women and girls, who they are in fact are meant to protect.

Criminal investigation is essential to respond to and prevent cases of femicide and violence against women. Unfortunately, there are many cases in which the PNC has not been able to carry out a professional, agile investigation, partly due to limited coordination with the MP. In addition, gender stereotypes persist in investigations of feminicide. An investigation into the nature of femicides in Guatemala and their relationship with the institutions in charge of the criminal investigation of these crimes highlights that 'repeatedly, the PNC has said that a large number of violent deaths of women are crimes of passion, supposedly derived from infidelity, jealousy, abandonment and breakdown of affective relationships, even from platonic love suffered by young people, especially gang members' (Maldonado, 2005: 85). This shows a discriminatory pattern on the part of the PNC, a lack of respect for the dignity of the victims and their families and a tendency to see gender-based crimes as a private matter rather than the result of a societal structure of gendered power relations. The IACHR noted this pattern both in the Veliz Franco case²⁰, and in the Velásquez Paiz case, where state officials did not have the ability, sensitivity, will or training to act immediately and effectively to the complaints made (IACHR, 2014, p. 5; IACHR, 2017, p. 1-2).

In the latter case, the Court 'also considered that there were gender stereotypes and damages that had a negative influence when conducting the investigation of what happened to Claudina Isabel Velásquez Paiz' (IACHR, 2017: 1-2). The bodies in charge of carrying out investigations to guarantee justice and security are plagued by unsuccessful police operations, an inability to coordinate among themselves, and a lack of gender perspective in the investigation of cases of violence against women. To these deficiencies we can add that the MP, which must work together with the PNC, also faces problems in terms of the lack of specialized personnel and sufficient budget (Myrna Mack Foundation, 2006: 6-7). This is why it is necessary to strengthen the relationship between the MP and the PNC. It should be noted that some progress has been made already, with the support and training of the international community and the CICIG.

These examples of violence against women committed directly by the PNC and the failure to effectively respond to such cases by private persons, explain why fear and distrust against the police prevail within the population. This is reinforced by the impression of persisting impunity among the population, which is fueled by various factors, including the limited resource conditions of the PNC which means that the police often does not respond to popular calls for support, and the protection of government or business interests vis-à-vis the population through evictions. Likewise, the existence of corruption networks and clandestine bodies within the institution limit the fight against impunity in Guatemala. This means that the Guatemalan population in general do not feel that their human security is protected. The situation for women is even worse, because in addition to the general levels of insecurity, they face gendered inequalities which present additional risks to their safety. The lack of an adequate response by the PNC, as a result of its masculine and militarized model and its ineffectiveness in dealing with cases of gendered violence, creates a situation in which gender-based violence and harassment can be committed with impunity.

²⁰María Isabel Veliz Franco, aged 15, disappeared on December 16, 2001. Her mother reported her disappearance to the PNC the next day and her dead body was found on December 18. The case was transferred to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in 2012. In its ruling, it establishes that the investigation by the MP and PNC was not carried out adequately; they committed errors in due diligence and there were discrimination biases. This is the first case that orders the PNC and MP to improve the criminal investigation into acts of femicide (Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Case of Veliz Franco et al. vs. Guatemala. Judgment of May 19, 2014).

Conclusions

This report shows the risks of remilitarization in Guatemalan National Civil Police and the negative impact it has on women's lives. Although the 1996 Peace Accords provided the opportunity to create new police with democratic values, it has maintained a centralized and hierarchical organizational structure, which resembles a militarized model. In practice certain militarized values, like disproportionate use of violence and considering offenders criminals are still predominant; thus, placing a stronger focus on suppressing political dissent than on serving the community.

Since 2012, many former members of the army have gained control over the MINGOB and the PNC. As a result, the PNC was unable to detach itself from the heritage of the previously existing military security forces, which were accused of committing the most serious human rights violations and crimes against humanity during the internal armed conflict. Since its creation, members of the PNC have been accused of committing torture, extrajudicial executions, involving the presence of CIACS and corruption networks with connections to top levels in the MINGOB. Although there have been efforts and progress towards the professionalization of the police, police reform processes and the implementation of a model of civil and community policing focused on human security, and although there are many individual policemen and women with good intentions, this research confirms a worsening of the trend towards the militarization of the security model during the government of Jimmy Morales. This is reflected in the hierarchical and authoritarian organization style, the inadequate training of police officers, the inclusion of ex-military personnel as advisers and in high positions in the MINGOB and related institutions, the use of combined police-military forces, the use of military tools such as states of siege and evictions, and the excessive use of force by (riot) police, including violence and tear gas to disperse peaceful demonstrations or land evictions.

Militarized masculinities reinforce ideas about specific gender roles assigned to men, including the use of weapons, the exercise of violence, and the promotion of aggressive, misogynist, and authoritarian behavior to exercise command and control over the population. These practices are far removed from the civilian policing model, in which conflict resolution and crime prevention should be key priorities. These perceptions of hegemonic masculinity result in the low participation of women in the high command of the police and the normalization of sexual harassment inside the institution. Feminine values and roles are considered inferior, and not appropriate for an effective security model. These so-called 'feminine' values, such as empathy and communication, are however crucial for a police force that instills trust in and is close to the population, in a model of democratic and citizen security which the PNC should aspire to, and which could help to prevent the high levels of violence and gender-based violence that Guatemala continues to face. Hierarchy and discipline however prevail in the institution, preventing the voicing of critical opinions and discussions about militarized and oppressive practices by and in the PNC. There are however policemen and women who resist such militarized practices, and they should receive more support to form a critical mass to change the culture of the police. Also, the population increasingly resist militarized and violent police responses. These are opportunities for change that must be seized, with international support for continued police reform, particularly with a gendered perspective.

Furthermore, women represent only 16% of the police force, they continue subordinated and occupying the lower ranks of command. All the interviewed women for this study stated that they have felt devalued or discriminated because their peers and civilians consider them “weak”. This situation forces many of them to adopt masculine practices and behavior to be accepted by their partners and civilians.

Many of them suffer harassment and violence from their partners and superiors and are afraid to report it. Harassment is frequently tolerated by their superiors and authorities, whereas women who report are punished with a greater workload or transfers to other places. Reporting is often futile, because cases take too long, are not adequately followed up, or are archived. Impunity around harassment enables the continuity of violent masculinity within the PNC, which allows conditions of authoritarianism, violence, and misogyny to prevail.

Police officers work in precarious conditions and their working rights are systematically violated. This situation stimulates police corruption due to the low wages which are not enough to cover their expenses. They ask for bribes or participate in illicit activities. There are many cases of police authorities that have been arrested and convicted for corruption and drug trafficking.

The support of the international community has been important for the promotion of training in human rights, democratic security, and gender within the PNC. However, these processes have not been institutionalized, and fail to be implemented when support from the international community ceases. Oppressive forms of masculinity have not been directly addressed in the training processes, in police reform, or in the proposal for a Gender Equality Policy itself. Instead, there is resistance to addressing masculinities, since the idea prevails that this would entail the promotion

of homosexuality, which goes against the values of hegemonic masculinity dominant in the PNC and wider society. Also at the international level, there are few efforts to address masculinities as a central element in citizen security agendas. The Women, Peace, and Security Agenda, for example, focuses on women rather than men and masculinities. Yet when implementing gender equality policies, increasing the participation of women at all levels of the institutional hierarchy is not enough. Efforts must also be made to generate changes in the organizational culture and internal policies. It is important to reflect more deeply on how militarized or violent models of masculinity influence the organization of the police and the ways of dealing with insecurity, and how they affect women within the PNC and female citizens more broadly. Therefore, masculinities must become part of the PNC curriculum and of current training processes. Only by effectively applying a gender perspective to its work, which includes the transformation of violent models of masculinity, will the PNC be able to become an institution which effectively protects the security of all its citizens, including women and girls.

Recommendations

1. It is urgent to resume a comprehensive process of police reform that includes a gender perspective and a human rights approach. In line with the Peace Agreements, it must be prevented that former members of the military are able to take on functions working for or advising the MINGOB or the PNC. The appointment of the Minister of the Interior must be an open process, observed by civil society with veto mechanisms to guarantee that the appointed person is suitable for the position and is committed to democratic security, human rights, the fight against impunity and against the remilitarization of the police. Police

authorities must not have links to the military, to respect the strict separation between police and military forces.

2. The police training process must be strengthened. The content of the basic course must strengthen the capacities and knowledge of the doctrine of citizen security, human rights, conflict resolution, and a gender perspective which includes both theory on masculinities and the international commitments in relation to gender and gender-based violence. Training processes must reduce militarized symbolic practices and the exacerbated emphasis on physical strength and ability.
3. It is important to strengthen the police career. The curriculum of the Police Academy should be kept updated to integrate the latest standards on human and women's rights and civilian policing standards. The promotion and specialization schools must be continuous and permanent and promote the inclusion of women. Both training and evaluation should be developed with the contribution of expert civil society organizations and the collaboration of the international community to ensure that the real needs of society and human rights standards are included and addressed in the training. The removal of officers or chiefs should be based on an evaluation process and not a free decision of the Director of the Police or Minister of the Interior.
4. It is necessary to resume efforts to adopt and implement the developed Gender Equality Policy of the PNC, including measures to increase the number of women in the institution at all levels, and investigate and punish gender-based abuse and violence. The Policy must be reinforced to contribute to real structural changes based on diagnoses and evaluation of results. It must include the promotion of specific health and well-being measures for women within the PNC and address violent and militarized masculinities to prevent violence and protect both members of the PNC and the general population. It should also include a stronger focus on bringing the police closer to the population to regain trust, through training on communication and conflict resolution skills and empathy.
5. It is necessary to include and strengthen a multiethnic perspective in the security model, in internal policies to promote the participation of indigenous men and women in higher rank positions as well as implement more disaggregated data of the police force. To strengthen outreach to indigenous communities, it is important that police officers who speak indigenous languages be assigned to communities where the same language is spoken.
6. It is necessary to improve the PNC's wages and working conditions to prevent and reduce police corruption. Currently make it difficult for PNC agents to satisfy their basic needs, tempting them to ask the population for bribes during their duty. Corruption limits the fight against impunity and diminishes public trust in the PNC. Committing acts of corruption should be included as a serious offense.
7. A specialized unit of women police investigators must be established within the Office of Professional Responsibility (ORP) to supervise the reception and investigation of complaints of discrimination, harassment, and sexual violence within the PNC. The PNC top leadership must publicly declare its efforts to eliminate violent practices towards women and others within its institution, and effectively investigate and sanction cases of sexual and other forms of harassment and violence.

8. The UN Security Council and international organizations should take up the proposal of the women's and feminist movement on the inclusion of demilitarization and masculinities in the Women, Peace, and Security agenda.

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Impunity Watch (IW) is a non-profit human rights organisation dedicated to ending impunity for severe violations of human rights, especially in countries emerging from a violent past. We analyse, advocate, and partner to help local communities seek accountability for gross human rights abuses and for systemic injustice. In our work, we adopt a bottom-up, participatory, and context-sensitive approach, and support victims and survivors in exercising their rights. Our work is legal, social, and political. IW began its work in 2004 in response to calls from Guatemalan human rights groups for greater support in their struggle for redress after the internal armed conflict of 1960-1996. It was registered as an independent foundation in 2008 in the Netherlands. Today, IW works in a wide range of countries and has offices in Burundi, Guatemala, and The Netherlands.

In this report we examine the risk of militarization that has taken place in the last decade in the National Civil Police in Guatemala. We analyze the creation of the PNC and the legacy of the security forces during the armed conflict. We review its structure, composition, and current situation from a gender perspective, as well as police reform. We also describe the impact of militarized masculinities on the lives of women, both within the PNC and in wider society.

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