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THESIS

**THE BARRIERS LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES FACE
WITH FEMALE INTEGRATION INTO COMBAT
ROLES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

by

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March 2021

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INTEGRATION INTO COMBAT ROLES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

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ABSTRACT

Globally, only 23 countries recognize women as indispensable support in combat positions. American and Norwegian women are effectively utilized in Female Engagement Teams, and Israeli women are known to enhance combat effectiveness in infantry units. Nevertheless, gender gaps in equality still remain, particularly in Latin American militaries. In this thesis, Norway, Israel, and the United States illustrate the differing approaches and successes of female integration into combat positions. It seeks to identify what measures could be applied to Latin American militaries desiring added diversity. Evidence indicates that distinct cultural norms have either effectively assisted or impeded the advancement of women's employment into combat specialties. In Norway and Israel, the inclusion of women in the armed forces was dependent on affirmative legislative action toward gender equality. The United States demonstrated a lack of leadership support that hindered women's integration. In all cases, cultural norms featuring hegemonic masculinities impeded female participation in primary combat positions. Women in Latin America—a region with a similar cultural misogyny—will likely face the same types of obstacles to service in combat roles. By emulating Norway's framework, Latin American states would have the ability to force cultural change that potentially closes gender gaps and empowers the region's governments to improve the conditions of women wishing to serve in combat specialties.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ATS	Auxiliary Territorial Service
BUD/S	Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL
CNRC	Command Navy Recruiting Command
COIN	Counterinsurgency Operations
DADT	Don't Ask Don't Tell
DOD	Department of Defense
FET	Female Engagement Team
IDF	Israeli Defense Force
MOS	Military Occupational Specialties
NAP	National Action Plan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NORSOC	Norwegian Naval Special Operations Commando
NSW	Naval Special Warfare
OSF	Our Secure Future
PTSD	Post-traumatic Stress Disorder
RAND	Research and Development
SEAL	Sea, Air, Land
SFQC	Army Special Forces Qualification Course
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SWCC	Special Warfare Combat Craft
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR 1325	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325
USASOC	United States Army Special Operation Command
USMC	United States Marine Corps
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command
WPS	Women, Peace, and Security
WWII	World War II

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I. INTRODUCTION

Women in the armed forces have made great strides in the fight for egalitarianism and have been recognized as indispensable support in military combat positions. However, gender gaps in equality still remain in some parts of the world and within most militaries. Particularly in Latin America, “women are used as strategies and weapons of war, to break family and community balance, to carry out ethnic cleanse, rewards for soldiers, breakers of community resistance, [and] political lobbying.”¹ These gender disparities create institutional barriers to equal participation in Latin American militaries. Of the 167 countries containing military and paramilitary personnel, only 23 industrialized countries, mostly U.S. allies, allow women to serve in combat positions.² Currently, Brazil is the only country in Latin America that allows women to serve in these specialties. This decision was partly made to promote equal opportunity between both genders to help combat today’s modern warfare conflicts.³ However, since this region still experiences gender gaps, this thesis seeks to find solutions to assist in fully integrating females into Latin American militaries by reviewing the needs and requirements, and in particular, the need for women in combat-related positions. Though much attention has been paid to women’s military participation and contributions over the years, less research has been completed about the process and levels of female integration into combat specialties. Additionally, the specific focus on Latin American militaries, requirements, and capabilities to integrate women fully into combat arms is inadequate.

All things considered, a vast majority of Latin American countries that have integrated women into their militaries have done so differently when compared to their geographic neighbors by demanding distinct requirements and standards, while at the same time,

¹ Marcela Donadio et al., *Women in the Armed and Police Forces: Resolution 1325 and Peace Operations in Latin American* (Buenos Aires: RESDAL, 2010), 28.

² Eileen Russell, “A Study of the Military Exclusion Policy for Women: It’s Ethical Dimensions and Practical Impact” (master’s thesis, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, 2020), 101, <https://rucore.libraries.rutgers.edu/rutgers-lib/63332/>; “Military Size by Country 2020,” World Population Review, accessed January 21, 2021, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/military-size-by-country>.

³ Cecilia Tornaghi, “Why It’s Essential to Have More Women in Latin American’s Militaries,” *Americas Quarterly*, December 2019, <https://www.americasquarterly.org/article/why-its-essential-to-have-more-women-in-latin-americas-militaries/>.

discounting gender policies. Women willing to enter into these militaries have to deal with the legacy of an all-male institution, rooted in a structural patriarchal system embedded throughout Latin America. Although Brazil has lifted restrictions on women in the armed forces, not all Latin American militaries have included genders equally.⁴ Women in the Peruvian military, for instance, are subjected to sexual violence and harassment because the existing structural organization prolongs the unequal power dynamic between men and women.⁵ Moreover, some Latin American countries prohibit women from serving in certain military branches, which limits them from potential promotions in rank. Militaries without diverse leaders are unable to meet all the demands of 21st century conflicts.⁶ Likewise, all-male generals typically evaluate women's promotion and assessment boards. In Ecuador, for example, women do not have access to all specialties, such as combat engineering or military intelligence, which limits opportunities for promotion.⁷ Bolivia, on the other hand, has recognized its first female general in command of combat troops and has selected several female colonels to follow in that general's footsteps.⁸ That said, the Bolivia military prohibits its lower-ranking female service members from participating in combat-related billets. Given that gender inequalities continue to persist within Latin American militaries, achieving true gender equality might appear improbable.

The World Economic Forum reported that at the current pace, most Latin American countries could potentially close their gender gaps in 59 years or less.⁹ Paradoxically, this region is the global leader in female representation at the government level, with women

⁴ "Women in Military Careers in the Brazilian Armed Forces," DefesaNet, October 4, 2016, <https://www.defesanet.com.br/en/defense/noticia/23689/Women-in-Military-Careers-in-the-brazilian-Armed-Forces/>.

⁵ Cecilia Marcela Bailliet, "Structural Sexual Violence in the Peruvian Military: An Empirical Study of Discrimination against Women and Its Consequences in the Peruvian Armed Forces" (master's thesis, University of Oslo, 2010), 1, 51, <https://www.duo.uio.no/bitstream/handle/10852/22660/ThesisxLeiryxCornejoxChavez.pdf?sequence=1>.

⁶ Donadio et al., *Women in the Armed and Police Forces*, 77.

⁷ Donadio et al., 79.

⁸ Simeon Tegel, "A Bolivian Is Thought to Be the First Woman General in Latin American Commanding Combat Troops," *The World*, March 16, 2015, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2015-03-16/bolivian-thought-be-first-woman-general-latin-america-commanding-combat-troops>.

⁹ Klaus Schwab et al., *Global Gender Gap Report 2020 Insight Report* (Geneva, Switzerland: World Economic Forum, 2019), 6.

holding one-third of all seats in national legislatures within Latin America as a whole.¹⁰ Additionally, more women than men receive a higher education at local universities. Even though Latin America has closed 72.1 percent of its gender gaps, income disparities among genders are still great, and it is hard to find women in the labor force.¹¹ Similarly, the old machismo stereotypes still persist, and women and children continue to be targeted by mobs who subject them to dreadful acts of violence. According to a *Small Wars Journal* article titled, “Women, Peace and Security: A Competitive Edge in Latin American’s Human Domain,” author Chris Telley stated, “Latin American governments are largely ready for gender engagement but also sorely in need of assistance. Though over ninety percent of the nations in the region have programs to address women’s issues, only six have National Action Plans [NAP] for gender perspectives in the security sector and the region is still the most violent in the world for women.”¹² Successful NAPs require ambitious reforms, government action, and public support, and often require the engagement of local women. One ambitious reform would be more uniformed women performing gendered engagements, female intelligence and human connectivity, Telley argued, “offers a glint of hope in the very challenging fight against a corrupt mafia state, and in stability operations we have learned that women are an economic multiplier; they are safer borrowers and are more likely to invest earnings in their communities.”¹³ Historians and academic researchers progressively recognize gender engagements are critical to advancing gender equality.¹⁴ These engagements are not only essential for women’s advancements, but they also alter traditional gender norms that fortify patriarchy and inequalities that harm both genders.

¹⁰ *America’s Quarterly*, “Gender Equality; NEW AQ: How to Close Latin American’s Gender Gap by 2030,” October 19, 2020, <https://www.americasquarterly.org/article/new-aq-how-to-close-latin-americas-gender-gap-by-2030/>.

¹¹ Schwab et al., *Global Gender Gap Report 2020 Insight Report*, 23.

¹² Chris Telley, “Women Peace and Security: A Competitive Edge in Latin American’s Human Domain,” *Small Wars Journal* 17, no. 4 (June 18, 2019), https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/women-peace-and-security-competitive-edge-latin-americas-human-domain#_edn25.

¹³ Telley.

¹⁴ A. Gliniski et al., *Gender Equity and Male Engagement: It Only Works When Everyone Plays* (Washington, DC: International Center for Research on Women, 2018), 2, <https://www.cartierphilanthropy.org/uploads/media/5acb7ba53fb8f/icrw-maleengagementbrief-webready-v5-150dpi.pdf>.

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This thesis attempts to answer the following questions: (1) What are the challenges and achievements, main reforms, and lessons learned from the inclusion of women in combat roles?, (2) What measures can Latin American countries undertake to implement these reforms?, and (3) What factors have contributed to the barriers that keep women out of military service and combat roles from which Latin American countries can learn? Woven throughout this thesis are four identified factors: leadership, evolution, cultural norms, and unit-level acceptance that play a vital role in the successful integration of females into combat specialties. Measures taken by both Norway and Israel were effective at integrating women into combat functions, while the United States' case study demonstrated functional cultural deficiencies that hindered integrating women into combat roles.

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Militaries have made historic progress with women's participation. Yet, each country took different paths with female integration into combat military occupational specialties (MOS). Israel and Norway, for instance, began integrating women into combat-armed positions more than two decades ago with mandatory military selective service requirements to better promote an egalitarian society.¹⁵ The United States rescinded its combat exclusion policy in 2015 that permitted women to serve in every military occupation based on abilities and not gender. All three of these countries that have made combat roles available to women have not only assisted females with more opportunities in career fields typically labeled masculine, but have also assisted these regions to progress toward a more egalitarian culture. Evidential research conducted by Our Secure Future (OSF) reported that to prevent violence against women and girls, regions that extend equal rights regardless of gender, obtain economic prosperity and are known to be safer and healthier. Additionally, OSF reports that closing gender gaps of equality in Latin American regions could reduce corruption, end

¹⁵ "Norway Introduces Compulsory Military Service for Women, Bunking Them in Mixed Dorms with Men," *The Straits Times*, August 25, 2016, <https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/norway-introduces-compulsory-military-service-for-women-bunking-them-in-mixed-dorms>; Meir Elran and Gabriel Sheffer, *Military Service in Israel: Challenges and Ramifications*, vol. 159 (Israel: Institute for National Security Studies, 2016), 14.

poverty, and assist with achieving more trust in government.¹⁶ If equal status is given to both genders, which starts with gender equality in its militaries, Latin American countries may experience reduced violence, and be able to establish peace and stability.

Women need equal opportunities and access to platforms so their voices can be heard. Research conveys that when women are in leadership roles, their inimitable skills and styles of leading improve government function and security, which then advances cultures toward overall peace.¹⁷ Yet, women in more developing and cultural barrier countries “continue to be excluded from peace and political processes because of discriminatory laws, social stereotypes and institutional obstacles.”¹⁸ Thus, when the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS), its objective was global implementation.¹⁹ Recently, the UNSC held a meeting and its theme focused on how to implement WPS successfully in certain Latin American countries. The overarching consensus at the end of the meeting was to increase women’s participation in the military armed forces, peace operations, and national security services. Accordingly, increasing women’s employment opportunities in Latin American militaries—such as the implementation of females into combat roles—will assist with WPS endeavors. Additionally, WPS implemented into a country’s NAP will help reduce poverty levels, decrease violence against women and children, and push toward peace and stability.

The war in Afghanistan exposed operational limitations of not having females fully integrated into primary combat specialties. Before 2005, male soldiers were unable to gather

¹⁶ “Just the Facts: A Selected Annotated Bibliography to Support Evidence-Based Policymaking on Women, Peace and Security,” Our Secure Future, 2019, 3, <https://www.oursecurefuture.org/publications/policymaking-women-peace-security>.

¹⁷ Our Secure Future, 6.

¹⁸ UN Women, “Women, Peace and Security 2019,” United Nations, 2019, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-peace-security/2019>.

¹⁹ This resolution “calls for the prosecution of crimes against women, increased protection of women and girls during war, the appointment of more women to UN peacekeeping operations and field missions and an increase in women’s participation in decision-making processes at the regional, national and international level.” Carol Cohn, Helen Kinsella, and Sheri Gibbings, “Women, Peace and Security Resolution 1325,” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 6, no. 1 (January 2004): 130, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461674032000165969>.

intelligence, perform security touch checks, and converse with local Afghan women.²⁰ Females in the Norwegian and U.S. militaries were successful in counterinsurgency operations (COIN) in collecting data and intelligence with increased access to women in conservative cultures once they were integrated into the countries' female engagement teams (FETs).²¹ FETs handled gender-related conflicts differently than their male counterparts, and thus were able to gain valuable intelligence and the trust of the local Afghani female population. Moreover, Middle Eastern countries are not the only regions where added operational interaction with the female populace is needed. Latin American countries experience corruption, sex trafficking, and drug smuggling; therefore, female gendered engagements and human intelligence are critical for these types of situations. This added diversity, by means of female engagements with local female populace, could assist with minimizing violence against women and sex trafficking which will undoubtedly become invaluable. Accordingly, increasing gendered engagements and assisting in the safekeeping of women will reduce gender gaps in equality to create a path toward peace and stability.

The integration of women into combat roles in Norway, Israel, and the United States is dynamic due to the various routes and timelines each country took to implement combat inclusion policies for females. Each of these countries had its own unique struggles and achievements that can assist Latin American countries with reforms and measures for future implementation. From these perspectives, this thesis is relevant to policymakers in Latin America and beyond this region, in that, it provides an analysis of the challenges and prospects for successful integration of women into combat related MOSs should the region be open to gender diversity in these types of billets.

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review compares those international states that have previously integrated women into combat specialties and their associated struggles and delays to those in

²⁰ Gayle Tzemach Lemmon, *Ashley's War: The Untold Story of a Team of Women Soldiers on the Special Ops Battlefield* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2016), abstract.

²¹ U.S. Army War College, *Female Engagement Teams (FET) Blueprint* (Carlisle, PA U.S. Army War College, 2017), 3, https://www.academia.edu/35312738/_U_Female_Engagement_Teams_FET_Blueprint.pdf.

Latin America. Globally, only a handful of countries prohibit women from serving in their armed forces, while the remaining do, and of them, only 23 have fully integrated women into combat roles.²² Many Western, developed countries have integrated women; however, outside of the west, it is rare to find women in combat roles, as gender gaps remain, particularly in the Latin American region. Although, these 23 countries have pushed to achieve the truest form of gender equality within its militaries, it was not without significant struggles and countless delays. Upon examining the available literature, recurrent themes appear in the fight to integrate women into combat roles. The most prevalent theme is the exclusionary, male-dominated culture and hegemonic masculinity even at the highest ranks in the military. Despite that, combat-centric commands are the epitome of this culture and the top-ranking officers making the administrative decisions to allow women into these roles are the primary perpetrators of this mentality. Thus, culture at the leadership level precluded women from serving in combat roles. A second recurrent theme is leadership and the lack of female representation in senior ranks. Finally, the third theme delaying the immediate integration of women into combat roles is that of social inclusion at the all-male unit level, with the assumption that being a more diverse force will supposedly hinder unit cohesion. Even at the bottom level ranks, women are scrutinized and still viewed as the weaker, subordinate sex. The existing literature focuses on these three themes.

1. Culture and Hegemonic Masculinity

The underlying debate between scholars on whether women should or should not be in the military let alone screen for combat billets is no longer the concern, because women are now filling these roles. The discussion is whether the culture and the already established male dominated society has previously prohibited women from applying for roles or created delays for females' entry into these career paths. The topic among scholars, like Martin van Creveld, suggests that incorporating women will disrupt or change the already established and sustained high tempo force. Women's deployment health, as well as mental and physical

²² Russell, "A Study of the Military Exclusion Policy for Women," 101.

attributes, will also potentially be affected.²³ However, feminist scholars, such as Raewyn Connell, Claire Duncanson, Megan MacKenzie, and Cynthia Enloe, have examined and argued this topic for years and suggested different viewpoints.

In *Masculinities*, Connell's research found that different sets of behaviors existed. Not only individual behaviors, but also social practices by groups, help construct the meaning of masculinity. According to Connell, disrupting these patterns could result in a violent and dominating form of masculinity that could be very damaging to the culture and society.²⁴ Reflecting on Connell's research, Andrea Goldstein said, "women's acceptance into a sphere reserved for the pinnacle of hegemonic masculinity and the power it promises simultaneously grants women access to that power, and undermines men's perceived ability to prove their masculinity."²⁵ Duncanson—a researcher of gender politics—could not agree more. She stated, "when hegemonic masculinity is applied in empirical cases, it is most often used to demonstrate the way in which hegemonic masculinity shifts and adopts new practices in order to enable some men to retain power over others."²⁶ The possibility of taking away the ultimate warrior roles from men with the integration of women could leave them with nothing, according to multiple male Special Forces members in an interview with Goldstein, Senior Policy Advisor for the House of Representatives.²⁷ Policies have changed, but attitudes and biases remain within the culture; however, Connell explained further that opening up these opportunities for women could result in the potential for social change, by "recognizing internal contradictions and the possibilities of movement toward gender democracy."²⁸

²³ Martin van Creveld, "To Wreck a Military," *Small Wars Journal*, January 2013, <https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/to-wreck-a-military>.

²⁴ Robert W. Connell, *Masculinities*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 235.

²⁵ Andrea N. Goldstein, "Why Are You Trying to Destroy the Last Good Thing Men Have? Understanding Resistance to Women in Combat Jobs," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 20, no. 3 (July 3, 2018): 387, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2018.1451259>.

²⁶ Claire Duncanson, "Hegemonic Masculinity and the Possibility of Change in Gender Relations," *Men and Masculinities* 18, no. 2 (June 2015): 231, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X15584912>.

²⁷ Goldstein, "Why Are You Trying to Destroy the Last Good Thing Men Have?"

²⁸ Robert W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept," *Gender & Society* 19, no. 6 (December 2005): 829, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243205278639>.

In the early 1980, Connell first introduced the term “hegemonic masculinity” as part of her gender order theory, which is a concept that has been particularly influential in gender politics and has attracted much debate.²⁹ Connell defined hegemonic masculinity as “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.”³⁰ Enloe explained, “In many of the world’s armies, for example, it is a tradition to insult a potential or defeated enemy by calling him a woman.”³¹ In this theoretical framework, only the exceptional women can succeed, and most women and men not at the top of the hierarchy of hegemonic masculinity are left behind.³² However, it is still highly irregular for women to be present in any form of armed conflict. One reason, Mann said, is that “recourse to violence has been considered the supreme male prerogative, even the most gendered of all privileges. When women challenge this by staking their claim on these seemingly unalienable rights—be it within rigid, state-authorized parameters or a social insurgency—the very structure of patriarchal society is undermined.”³³ Therefore, the male-controlled structure embedded in society should be changed, according to Megan MacKenzie. In *Band of Brothers*, MacKenzie claimed, “the [combat exclusion] policy was founded on the understanding that women were not natural soldiers, were not physically inferior to men, and would ruin the bonds necessary for combat missions;” it was a policy driven by myth and emotions.³⁴ “Let women fight,” declared MacKenzie, “it will bring formal policies in line with current practices and allow armed forces

²⁹ Connell, *Masculinities*, abstract, 1.

³⁰ Connell, 77.

³¹ Frank J. Barrett, “The Organizational Construction of Hegemonic Masculinity: The Case of the U.S. Navy,” *Gender, Work & Organization* 3, no. 3 (1996): 133, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0432.1996.tb00054.x>.

³² April Carter, “Should Women Be Soldiers or Pacifists?,” *Peace Review* 8, no. 3 (September 1, 1996): 331–35, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10402659608425975>.

³³ Carol Mann, “Women in Combat: Identifying Global Trends,” in *Female Combatants in Conflict and Peace: Challenging Gender in Violence and Post-Conflict Reintegration*, ed. Seema Shekhawat (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 20, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137516565_2.

³⁴ Megan H. MacKenzie, *Beyond the Band of Brothers: The U.S. Military and the Myth that Women Can’t Fight* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 2.

to overcome their misogynistic past. In modern military, women should have the right to fight.”³⁵

Arguably, women’s concerns with acceptance into certain military roles are still prevalent today. The brotherhood mentality still stands strong throughout all services as representation of women in combat roles and high-ranking leadership positions is still minimal. Research has shown that humans have an innate passion to associate and evaluate themselves compared to others, and if they do not see someone they identify with within that specific organization, it is difficult to trust or feel trusted. In 1954, social psychologist Leon Festinger first introduced this phenomenon known as the social comparison theory. Festinger believed that the theory stemmed from “the drive for self-evaluation and the necessity for such evaluation being based on comparison with other persons.”³⁶ Furthermore, according to Buunk et al.’s research, social comparison theory helps individuals “learn about our abilities and skills, the appropriateness and validity of our opinions, and about our relative social status by comparing our own attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors with those of others.”³⁷ Though Festinger stated, “the most meaningful comparisons we make tend to be with those we see as similar to ourselves.”³⁸ With little to no representation of the female sex within this band of brother culture, the likelihood for women to screen or apply for combat roles is negligible. According to a dissertation written by Kylanne Hunter about the variations of female integration into militaries, the most common approach to “solving” issues of female integration has been to establish better opportunities for recruitment by enhancing the existing policies aimed specifically at female recruits.³⁹

³⁵ Megan H. MacKenzie, “Let Women Fight: Ending the U.S. Military’s Female Combat Ban,” *Foreign Affairs* 91, no. 6 (2012): 42.

³⁶ Leon Festinger, “A Theory of Social Comparison Processes,” *Human Relations* 7, no. 2 (May 1, 1954): 138, <https://doi.org/10.1177/001872675400700202>.

³⁷ Abraham P. Buunk and Frederick X. Gibbons, “Social Comparison: The End of a Theory and the Emergence of a Field,” *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Special Issue on Social Comparison Processes, 102, no. 1 (January 1, 2007): 3–21, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2006.09.007>.

³⁸ Festinger, “A Theory of Social Comparison Processes,” 117.

³⁹ Kylanne Hunter, *Shoulder to Shoulder Yet Worlds Apart: Variations in Women’s Integration in the Militaries of France, Norway, and the United States* (Denver: University of Denver, 2019), 273, <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2665&context=etd>.

As society continues to study the arguments that focus around female integration into combat-related specialties, the research once again returns to hegemonic masculinity and the band of brother façade suggesting that women just do not belong. Based on the available research, these debates still continue today. MacKenzie's argument centers on a belief that the U.S. military institution is inherently flawed and feminist objectives are not being reached. The ideas of brotherly love, boys club, and male courage under fire concepts must shift to gender-neutral concepts to integrate women effectively into combat-armed positions.

2. Leadership

Women's status in the military has increased over the last decade; however, female leadership and access to power within certain militaries still remains low. In *Gender, Hierarchy and Leadership: An Introduction*, the authors provide "evidence of biased evaluation of women's competence and potential for leadership, showing that across a wide variety of settings and contexts, women are presumed to be less competent than men and less worthy to hold leadership positions."⁴⁰ For decades, common traditional cultural norms placed women subordinate to men, and this research clearly delineates women's work as military leaders and societal managers secondary to men. The authors outlined an institutional gender stereotype in which military members perceive men as the stronger leaders while women are more likely to show integrity and are less likely to be respected in leadership roles.⁴¹ According to this research, a successful military leader depends on the sex of the gender or both genders adapting to a masculine leadership framework.

In the *Handbook on Sociology of Gender*, Janet Chafetz ties together theoretical ideas from other feminist scholars about gender sociology, leadership, influence, and power dominance. One assumption made suggested that, "given men's higher status and more authoritative roles in society, one might argue that men are more likely than women to acquire a personality trait of dominance."⁴² Agreeing with Chafetz, Helen Hacker alleged that women

⁴⁰ Linda L. Carli and Alice H. Eagly, "Gender, Hierarchy, and Leadership: An Introduction," *Journal of Social Issues* 57, no. 4 (2001): 631, <https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00232>.

⁴¹ Carli and Eagly, 632.

⁴² Janet Saltzman Chafetz, *Handbook of the Sociology of Gender* (New York: Springer, 2006), 265, <https://doi.org/10.1007/0-387-36218-5>.

and blacks have a great deal in common; they both have been assigned stereotyped characteristics and are discriminated against by the dominant.⁴³ This trait is still seen in combat commands within the U.S. armed forces, since combat leadership positions are currently held mostly by white males while females remain subordinate to them.

In January 2013, the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) repealed the 1994 combat exclusion policy on women serving on the front lines and implemented considerations for integrating women into closed occupations in U.S. combat forces.⁴⁴ It took more than three years from the new policy's creation for it to be implemented in 2015. The DOD thus had more than enough time to prepare for female integration. However, the delays and extempore integration of females in combat roles are still apparent in the United States, within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) nations, and throughout the Latin American region, because males are the dominant leaders in charge.⁴⁵ DOD literature and gender studies are imperative to this research to identify the institutional and leadership gaps and factors associated with gender integration and any related risks associated with said integration to enable the assimilation of women into previously closed U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) occupations.

The combat exclusion policy limited females and any opportunity for them to hold the highest ranks in the U.S. military. Retired Air Force General Lester L. Lyles said, "we know that [the exclusion] hinders women from promotion...they're not getting credit for being in combat arms, [and] that's important for their considerations for the most senior flag ranks."⁴⁶ Even so, it has been five years since the inclusion of women into combat roles, and high-ranking combat positions still show no signs of female representation. It is interesting, however, that in mixed-sex interactions, males are normally voted into the leadership position

⁴³ Shira Tarrant, *When Sex Became Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 18, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203819494>.

⁴⁴ Thomas S. Szayna et al., *Considerations for Integrating Women into Closed Occupations in U.S. Special Operations Forces*, Research Reports, RR-1058-USSOCOM (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2016), ix.

⁴⁵ Lisa Daniel, "Panel Says Rescind Policy on Women in Combat," Department of the Army, March 2011.

⁴⁶ Kristy N. Kamarck, *Women in Combat: Issues for Congress*, CRS Report No. R42075 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2016), 11, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42075.pdf>.

over their female counterparts. According to Chafetz, “high dominance women often suggested to their low-dominance partner that he take the lead, showing the impact of cultural beliefs about who is a more legitimate or competent candidate for leadership.”⁴⁷ She also claimed that if someone is not perceived as a full member of a team, it is hard for said person to be a leader.⁴⁸

Leadership has customarily been interpreted as a masculine enterprise, especially within the military spectrum. With continued biases toward women in the military, the masculine framework will dictate the perception of how women can and should lead. According to ongoing research, to promote to higher ranks, utilizing traditional habits must be considered that could entail adopting male behaviors and practices that have assisted society in the past. For women to have the same status as men, women “will have to participate equally in those contexts where the most important and far-reaching decisions are made.”⁴⁹ With strict policies and gender norms remaining in place that hinder women’s ability to achieve the highest-ranking positions, this status change is currently impossible to achieve.

3. Social Inclusion and Cohesion

For decades, academics have argued over the concepts of unit cohesion and diversity. Some academics suggest that when units combine both cohesion and diversity on and off the battlefield, they contribute toward a team’s success during highly stressful training missions and in wartime.⁵⁰ Other studies suggest that diversity directly inhibits cohesion and is harmful toward certain tasks and missions.⁵¹ Despite academic study, establishing cohesion through social inclusion is paramount, and without diversity, most missions become monotonous. Researchers Albert Carron and Packianthan Chelladurai identified some key findings

⁴⁷ Chafetz, *Handbook of the Sociology of Gender*, 7.

⁴⁸ Chafetz, 89.

⁴⁹ Carli and Eagly, “Gender, Hierarchy, and Leadership,” 634.

⁵⁰ Kristy N. Kamarck, *Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity in the Armed Services: Background and Issues for Congress*, CRS Report No. R44321 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2019), 2, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R44321>.

⁵¹ Kamarck, 2.

regarding unit cohesion and have claimed that it is multidimensional.⁵² These multidimensions include both task cohesion—that increases unit effectiveness and social cohesion—that can assist with increasing individual unit members’ resilience. According to their research, military units are designed to perform specific tasks that result in a group of members working together and maintaining high group cohesion regardless of gender or personality differences, because they need each other to attain certain goals.⁵³ Nevertheless, “preexisting unit concerns such as low unit cohesion, low acceptance of women and quality of leadership considerations have larger adverse effects on unit readiness and cohesion in mixed gender units.”⁵⁴ Further research conducted by Margaret Harrell and Laura Miller proposes that “people whose unit cohesion appeared to be low were most likely to mention gender as an issue, although gender was only one of several characteristics that separated people—and was often not the primary rift.”⁵⁵

Martin van Creveld—a well-known military historian and theorist—is an opponent of women serving in combat roles. He perceives female soldiers as the weaker sex, who are certain to ruin team cohesion and are powerless in war, and who hardly ever pull their own weight.⁵⁶ For van Creveld, including women in the armed service corrodes the bonds of masculinity, and distracts and undermines the cohesiveness of all-male units. He said, “over time the more women that join any organization, and the more important the role they play in that organization, the more its prestige declines.”⁵⁷ Those agreeing with van Creveld suggest that all-male units will never accept women as part of the team, which leads to the failure of cohesion. However, drawing on archival research where women had yet to be integrated into armies hardly provides evidential facts that women should not be incorporated into the

⁵² Albert V. Carron and Packianthan Chelladurai, “The Dynamics of Group Cohesion in Sport,” *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology* 3, no. 2 (June 1, 1981): 123–39, <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsp.3.2.123>.

⁵³ Carron and Chelladurai, 123.

⁵⁴ Szayna et al., *Considerations for Integrating Women into Closed Occupations*, 89.

⁵⁵ Margaret C. Harrell and Laura L. Miller, *New Opportunities for Military Women: Effects upon Readiness, Cohesion, and Morale* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1997), 61, https://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR896.html.

⁵⁶ van Creveld, “To Wreck a Military.”

⁵⁷ van Creveld.

military. Van Creveld's historical findings rely only on assumptions, hypotheses, and interviews with male soldiers; "Women are certain to get pregnant," which will unsettle social cohesion and lead to "women being unable to compete with men when it comes to physical fitness."⁵⁸

Anthony King argued that cohesion relies more on training, experience, and professional competence over gender, contrary to van Creveld's beliefs about females damaging unit cohesion.⁵⁹ King said, professionalism, maturity, and ethical beliefs enhance readiness and bring together unit level solidarity. Cohesion is formed within a unit with proper training and social inclusion. Retired Israeli Army Brigadier General Yehudit Grisaro stated, "the majority of soldiers know the rules and recognize the contribution of women. Women are treated in the same way as the men, and they are judged the same as the men. They are paid the same as the men."⁶⁰ Grisaro also stated Israeli women who hold combat roles positions are seen as soldiers and valued members of the unit, which provides not only diversity, but also a different element to cohesion. Shaping a new standard of social inclusion to diversity is the key to success.

Undoubtedly, research indicates that certain cultural differences still prohibit women's advancement in the military and into combat roles. Opinions pertaining to the need for women to be in direct fire and on the front lines, along with an imbalance in unit cohesion with added diversity, remain the biggest points of contention. The literature found provided arguments from both sides of the spectrum; however, more research was found concerning the positive attributes diversity brings to a team. According to Robert Egnell, "the idea that we have achieved the pinnacle of human understanding of unit cohesion and combat effectiveness and that change can only be for the worse is ahistorical."⁶¹ Unit cohesion will

⁵⁸ van Creveld.

⁵⁹ Anthony King, "Women in Combat," *The RUSI Journal* 158, no. 1 (February 2013): 4, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2013.774634>.

⁶⁰ Nick Hopkins, "The Israeli Defence Forces: First for Women," *The Guardian*, sec. World news, July 9, 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2012/jul/09/israeli-defence-forces-women-equality>.

⁶¹ Robert Egnell, "Don't Exclude Women from Combat Units Because of Cohesion," *War on the Rocks*, November 26, 2014, <https://warontherocks.com/2014/11/dont-exclude-women-from-combat-units-because-of-cohesion/>.

not be affected as long as both men and women are socially included, competent, and well trained.

D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

The primary concern in any case study related to women serving in front-line combat operations is that a broad consensus does not exist among scholars or leadership as to what truly remains the issue with exclusion. Women have been participating in combat-related positions for centuries; however, in 2021, only 23 countries have embedded and implemented the combat inclusion policy for females in their countries.

The main research question for this thesis seeks to answer the following questions: What are the challenges and achievements, main reforms, and lessons learned from the inclusion of women in combat roles? What measures can Latin American countries undertake to implement these reforms? What factors have contributed to the barriers that keep women out of military service and combat roles from which Latin American countries can learn? These questions posed and raised three important hypotheses for consideration: (1) if national culture heavily features hegemonic masculinity, then it is likely that particular culture norms are the cause of the delays with female integration into combat-related specialties, (2) if the hierarchical leader level is present, or male leadership is prevalent, and is not supportive of female integration into combat billets, then it is likely female integration will not succeed, and (3) if preexisting unit-level apprehensions toward the acceptance of women exist, then it is likely that an imbalance in unit cohesion will occur with female inclusion.

E. RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis qualitatively analyzed three separate case studies: Norway, Israel, and the United States. Each case study evaluated the integration of females into military combat positions (dependent variable) by measuring and assessing four markers: leadership, evolution, cultural norms, and unit-level acceptance. Leadership identified key female and male stakeholders in high-ranking positions within the military and the civilian sector, and their support toward the dependent variable. Evolution denoted the rate of change of capacity of the dependent variable. Cultural norms exposed paradigm shifts, and unit-level acceptance showed changes in male service members' attitudes toward the dependent variable.

Measuring the evolution and rate of change to the dependent variable may have been the simplest form of data collected, since combat billets that remain closed to women and billets that continue to go unfilled by females since time of inclusion can be counted. Similarly, stakeholders and high-ranking positions filled by women were available through open-source data, which makes the leadership variable easy to determine. Figures and statistics were collected by well-known think tanks on the attitudes among the male service members by means of surveys and reports, and scholarly articles written on this very issue. Cultural norms were the hardest variable to measure since the dependent variable is evaluated based on three factors: leadership support, evolution of the dependent variable, and attitudes among male servicemembers. The presence of all three factors resulted in a country passing the cultural norm test with a progression toward a high gender egalitarian institutional organization, which has a high level of integration. If any of the three aforementioned factors are missing, then that country will likely have a low gender egalitarian military and a low level of integration.

F. THE LEVELS OF INTEGRATION

The country case studies in this thesis have created a framework depicting high, moderate, and low levels of female integration into combat positions. It is important to clarify the levels as they coincided with the dependent and independent variables. The independent variables are individually necessary but jointly sufficient as they determined a country's level of female integration into combat positions. A high level of integration is present when all three independent variables: leadership support, evolution and unit-level acceptance, were measured and the dependent variable rose and a cultural shift toward a gender-neutral or high-gender egalitarian military formed. A low level of integration is present when all three independent variables were measured and the dependent variable fell or remained neutral and cultural norms did not present a shift toward an egalitarian military.

G. THESIS OVERVIEW AND DRAFT CHAPTER OUTLINE

This thesis consists of five chapters, with each country case study having its own dedicated chapter. The significance of the research questions originated in Chapter I, which provided preliminary information for the audience to understand the current history and

barriers to women's participation in military service particularly related to combat positions. The flow of this thesis continues into three comparative case studies chapters that divide the history of women in combat roles, and then explain any possible delays, challenges, and achievements that have led to the integration of women into combat specialties. Chapter II analyzes Norway as the first case study and finds that Norway's seamless evolution, strong and committed leadership, and prevalently egalitarian cultural norms all contributed to effective, high levels of female integration into combat roles. Chapter III examines Israel and discovers a receptive, gender-neutral culture; however, some resistance and political objectives from the ultra-Orthodox community remain, which indicates a moderate level of female integration into combat positions. Chapter IV assesses the United States and uncovers a country with a stagnant evolution, negligible leadership support, and troubling cultural patterns that contributed to the low levels of female integration of women into combat roles. The conclusion, Chapter V, lays out the findings of this thesis and recommends that Latin American countries refer to the Norwegian female integration methods for measures and guidance on how to integrate women into combat specialties effectively.

II. THE NORWEGIAN EXPERIENCE WITH INTEGRATING WOMEN INTO COMBAT POSITIONS

The obliging, egalitarianism, and pragmatic cultural factors so heavily painted within Norwegian society positively affected the advancement of women in its military and challenged traditional gender roles. For decades, Norwegian leadership galvanized the Nordic cultural shifts and a once dominant male culture changed to one that accepts genders equally. Once gender-mainstreaming concepts were embedded and policies were changed within the Norwegian society, new traditional norms outside the armed forces helped reinforce and sustain a gender-neutral military, which created a high level of female integration into combat-armed positions. As this case study shows, Norwegian female leadership spearheaded women's advancements in political and military employment.⁶²

Norway's strong and committed leadership and gender-neutral cultural norms serve as a positive case study; women in countries with comparable female governance will likely achieve the same results. Paradoxically, Latin American countries also have high levels of female representation in politics,⁶³ yet Norway has already solved the integration problem in the military, which still challenges Latin America. This cultural correlation of women in high-level positions in both Norway and Latin America proves significant because Norway positively depicts a country that has successfully integrated women into combat positions due to hierarchical female leadership prevalent throughout its society. Thus, Latin American female leaders acting as catalysts in support of female integration into combat positions can challenge traditional societal norms and assist in creating a gender-neutral climate.

This country study begins with a historical account of the evolution of gender-equality in Norway, followed by the Norwegian experience of integrating women into combat specialties, and the challenges and achievements that the Norwegian Armed Forces

⁶² Nina C. Raaum, "Gender Equality and Political Representation: A Nordic Comparison," *West European Politics* 28, no. 4 (September 1, 2005): 872, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402380500217003>.

⁶³ *Americas Quarterly*, "NEW AQ"; Schwab et al., *Global Gender Gap Report 2020 Insight Report*, 22.

faced with this implementation. An analysis of Norway, and its policy measures regarding female integration, recruitment, and retainment will offer insight into how Latin American militaries may fully integrate women into its armed forces combat specialties and establish gender equality throughout their region.

A. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Norwegian women began serving in socially accepted female military roles in 1938, during a time when gender-equality was neither essential nor considered. Then, during World War II (WWII), women's participation in the military increased to fill subordinate medical and supply corps roles. Despite women's efforts during the war, national culture did not support women in the military during this timeframe since societal norms labeled military roles masculine. In *Women in War*, author Kjersti Ericsson penned, "these societal norms deeply rooted the idea that men were the natural providers while women were the natural homemaker."⁶⁴ Some women, however, exceeded these gender roles by taking on responsibilities Norwegians believed to be more masculine.⁶⁵ Anne Margrethe Strømsheim, in particular, was known for her actions as a nurse during the Battle of Hegra Fortress, where she commanded approximately 250 men even though people were skeptical of a woman in leadership.⁶⁶ Initially, military leaders were hesitant to award Strømsheim with the Norwegian Medal of Honor and Defence Medal due to her gender but did honor her later in her career. Like Strømsheim, Norwegian women were devalued but heavily utilized during WWII. Ericsson wrote, "women's efforts in the service of peace, and what they were exposed to during the war were not highlighted to the same extent as men's efforts."⁶⁷ Most Norwegian women who served during WWII kept quiet after the

⁶⁴ Kjersti Ericsson, *Women in War: Examples from Norway and Beyond* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 6.

⁶⁵ Ericsson, 7.

⁶⁶ Einar Rædergård, "Anne Margrethe Strømsheim," Trondheim, accessed September 30, 2020, <https://trondheim.com/anne-margrethe-stromsheim>.

⁶⁷ Ericsson, *Women in War*, 6.

war and they rarely shared their experience with family members; even those women who were prisoners of war remained silent.⁶⁸

In 1953, the Norwegian Parliament banned women from military service and decided they served a stronger purpose in more traditional feminine roles and housewife duties.⁶⁹ However, after the financial economy drastically increased in 1960, Norway experienced a human resource shortage within the civilian sector, which opened up more job opportunities to women. Nevertheless, these positions were lower paid since women were still prohibited from pursuing higher managerial careers and positions within the Norwegian military.⁷⁰ Although unique to the Nordic region, once the second wave's feminist movement challenged traditional gender norms and female occupation, and education rates increased, women quickly joined the political elite and pushed for a gender-neutral society by the end of the 1960s.⁷¹ The idea of a gender-neutral society enticed the Labour Party to move forward with a new agenda to promote gender equality across all spectrums. This new agenda created a shift toward liberal feminism, and Norway began to see women elected into parliament and the national assembly.⁷² From this point on, Norway progressed toward an egalitarian political culture once the Labour Party endorsed more women to obtain higher education and pursue governmental careers.

The turning point for women in Norway happened in the 1970s when the country witnessed a fresh mobilization of female leadership in the Norwegian national assembly.⁷³ Over the course of two elections, Norwegian women attained 24 percent of the seats in the cabinet with increasing success, and surpassed most Nordic countries.⁷⁴ Cultural factors,

⁶⁸ Ericsson, 7.

⁶⁹ Jeff Wooten, "Gender Integration into the Military: A Meta-Analysis of Norway, Canada, Israel, and the United States" (PhD diss., University of New England, 2015), 8, <https://dune.une.edu/theses/33>.

⁷⁰ Karin Bruzelius Heffermehl, "The Status of Women in Norway," *The American Journal of Comparative Law* 20, no. 4 (1972): 631, <https://doi.org/10.2307/839034>; Elvira Dinescu, "Norway: Women and the Military; A Study about Norway's Decision to Make Military Service Compulsory for Women" (master's thesis, Aalborg University, 2016), 17.

⁷¹ Raaum, "Gender Equality and Political Representation," 882.

⁷² Dinescu, "Norway," 17; Raaum, 878.

⁷³ Raaum, 878.

⁷⁴ Raaum, 878.

such as religion and education, assisted Norway with this political integration. According to Nina Raaum, “Protestantism, the prevailing religion of the Nordic region, is often considered as more ‘women-friendly’ compared to religions that advocate very traditional roles for women, such as Catholicism, Orthodox Christianity and Islam.”⁷⁵ These progressive changes and cultural influences attracted more female representation into government jobs and influenced the Norwegian Parliament to retract its original decision to exclude women from military service.

Then, in 1979, Norway ratified the Equal Status Act to prevent discrimination against women in employment opportunities and wages.⁷⁶ This act enabled the Norwegian Parliament and its ministries to include gender equality in their new action programs and embed gender-mainstreaming concepts throughout society. The Norwegian strategy called for all government institutions to integrate gender perspectives into their policies. This approach “represents a shift of policy focus from attention to women’s disadvantage to a more strategic attention to mainstreaming gender across organizations as a means of achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment.”⁷⁷ Ultimately, equal opportunity legislation applied in the civilian sector was now functional in the Norwegian Armed Forces, and required all public authorities and military figures to advance gender equality across all areas of society. Through these progressive policy initiatives, Gro Harlem Brundtland was elected the first female prime minister of Norway, with a mission to advance female representation in governmental positions. Since Brundtland, the proportion

⁷⁵ Raaum, 883.

⁷⁶ Sibylla Putzi, *To Z World Women in Culture & Business: 175 Countries—Position in Society, Legal Rights, Education, Dating, Marriage, and Family, Health, Social Customs, Women in Professions, Women as Business Owners, and Foreign Businesswomen* (Petaluma, CA: World Trade Press, 2008), 245, ProQuest, Ebookcentral.

⁷⁷ Margaret Alston, “Gender Mainstreaming in Practice: A View from Rural Australia,” *NWSA Journal* 18, no. 2 (2006): 123.

of women in the cabinet has not fallen below 40 percent.⁷⁸ These female representatives influenced a new social construct in gender relations and over time transformed the Norwegian society into an equitable gender-neutral culture. This transformation persuaded Norway to be the first NATO country to allow women into combat billets and Special Forces roles.⁷⁹

In sum, once Norwegian women were given opportunities to receive higher education and chances to advance in the political spectrum, women were elected into leadership positions and gender-mainstreaming concepts formed. Females in hierarchal positions challenged traditional masculine norms and a shift toward an egalitarian society was created.

B. HIGH LEVEL OF FEMALE INTEGRATION: CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

For more than two decades, Norway's egalitarian society and its female leadership reinforced and sustained a gender-balanced military. These female policy makers created a gender-mainstreaming framework by implementing unbiased initiatives that ultimately shifted gender gaps of equality and placed Norway second out of 153 recognized countries on the global map index of 2020.⁸⁰ This strategy reflected the importance of having women share 40 percent of government seats and high-ranking positions within the Norwegian military. These female leaders oversaw successful innovated policies that received international recognition, such as mandatory conscription of both genders, same-sex dormitories, and mixed gender-units to enhance the military through diversity. Nevertheless, challenges still remain with the recruitment and retainment of Norwegian

⁷⁸ In 2003, Norway enacted a gender-quota law with an unwritten rule of at least 40 percent gender balance in the Cabinet. While the initial proposed use of quotas in Norway caused an uproar, they have proven to be a successful measure in leading gender equality changes in the society and within the military. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Achieving Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and Strengthening Development Cooperation: Dialogues at the Economic and Social Council* (New York: United Nations, 2010), 94; Anne Sweigart, "Women on Board for Change: The Norway Model of Boardroom Quotas as a Tool for Progress in the United States and Canada," *International Law*, 2012, 99a.

⁷⁹ Kevin Ponniah, "Meet the Hunter Troop: Norway's Tough-as-Nails Female Soldiers," BBC News, sec. Europe, March 30, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39434655>.

⁸⁰ Schwab et al., *Global Gender Gap Report 2020 Insight Report*, 7.

female soldiers even with mandatory conscription. Yet, the women who have embarked into this gender-neutral military are tackling elite Special Forces billets traditionally labelled masculine and receiving global recognition for their achievements.

Norway's gender-neutral strategies, many of which contribute to a wide range of national policies, successfully highlight the importance of women in governmental institutions in both numbers and influence.⁸¹ Gender-neutral concepts allowed women to operate freely in society; concepts that eventually shifted male attitudes in the armed forces to recognizing that women's abilities, intelligence, and skills mattered more than their gender.⁸² Traditionally, gender-mainstreaming actions focused on females. However, Norway has recently adjusted gender specific measures that now target both genders and modify the imbalances between the two sexes within the Norwegian military.⁸³ These liberal measures cause men to become emotionally connected and gain the respect of their fellow female peers, bridge gaps in camaraderie, and build stronger solidarity with women in their units. When asked, Norwegian men preferred mixed-gendered units to all-male units and claimed that women added diversity and enhanced team unity.⁸⁴ To achieve the ultimate goal of equality, additional measures preventing male service members from using inappropriate language and engaging in violence toward women have been heightened using gender-mainstreaming tools.⁸⁵ Norway has closed 84.2 percent of its gender gaps and currently ranks in the global top 10 gender-equality countries because of these implemented gender equality concepts.⁸⁶ Even though gender-neutrality concepts are

⁸¹ Maria Stratigaki, "Gender Mainstreaming vs Positive Action: An Ongoing Conflict in EU Gender Equality Policy," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 12, no. 2 (May 1, 2005): 168, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506805051236>.

⁸² Stratigaki, 177.

⁸³ "Gender Equality," Gender in Norway, accessed February 18, 2021, <https://gender.no/gender-equality>.

⁸⁴ Elin Gustavsen, "Equal Treatment or Equal Opportunity? Male Attitudes towards Women in the Norwegian and U.S. Armed Forces," *Acta Sociologica* 56, no. 4 (November 1, 2013): 363, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0001699313480513>.

⁸⁵ Elida Høeg, "Gender Issues Are Ridiculed and Sabotaged in the Military," [Sciencenorway.no](https://partner.sciencenorway.no/gender-military/gender-issues-are-ridiculed-and-sabotaged-in-the-military/1584463), October 30, 2019, <https://partner.sciencenorway.no/gender-military/gender-issues-are-ridiculed-and-sabotaged-in-the-military/1584463>.

⁸⁶ Schwab et al., *Global Gender Gap Report 2020 Insight Report*, 9.

embedded throughout Norway and drive culture change, Norway continues to strive for true gender equality.

Norway's determination toward true gender equilibrium began in 1980 and continues today through the refinement of recommended policy initiatives and mandated proposals. For instance, when UNSCR 1325 was adopted—to ensure global commitment to protecting women's rights during combat—Norway directly increased female representation in the implementation and decision-making process.⁸⁷ To capitalize on gender-equality concepts, the Norwegian government issued a plan of action and implemented UNSCR 1325, with intentions to be the leading country on WPS initiatives.⁸⁸ However, 14 years have passed since the Norwegian Armed Forces implemented UNSCR 1325 and obstacles in achieving true gender equality still remain.⁸⁹ According to Lieutenant Colonel Lena Krvaring, “in the Armed Forces, we face challenges when it comes to gender, sexuality and matters related to women and security.”⁹⁰ For Norway to improve, it established and incorporated a new NAP that provided more funding for WPS's initiatives, which strongly emphasized women's participation in peacekeeping missions, and recognized the need for structural change in women's security.⁹¹ According to the WPS 2019 report, “the percentage of women in Norwegian military contributions to international missions and operations increased from 10.5 percent in 2018 to 12.9 percent in 2019, and an increase in the number of women deployed, from 101 to 131, which was consistent with the NAP's goal to improve the gender balance.”⁹² This supplementary NAP assisted with UNSCR 1325 gender-equality efforts and made WPS a priority on the

⁸⁷ Høeg, “Gender Issues are Ridiculed and Sabotaged in the Military.”

⁸⁸ Høeg.

⁸⁹ Høeg.

⁹⁰ Høeg.

⁹¹ Norwegian Ministries, *Implementing Norway's National Action Plan 2019–2022 Women, Peace and Security* (Oslo: Norwegian Ministries, 2019), 19, https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/ud/dokumenter/rapporter/wps_report2019.pdf.

⁹² Norwegian Ministries, 17.

UN's normative agenda.⁹³ Norway's enhancement to UNSCR 1325 effectively promoted women's rights and equal opportunity through foreign and domestic policy and became a key priority within the Norwegian armed forces and its government.

In 2013, the Norwegian Parliament made selective service mandatory for women, which effectively expanded equal opportunity through domestic policy. If Norway's desire was to become a more gender-neutral country, it was only fair to draft women alongside their male peers. Norwegian men have long participated in compulsory military service, and although conscription in Norway originally began on a voluntary basis, by 2015, both men and women no longer had a choice but a duty.⁹⁴ Norwegian women were now indebted to the draft, and according to PEW Research, "while all Norwegian citizens must register, no one is forced to serve against their will; in any given year, only about one-in-six registrants actually end up being conscripted."⁹⁵ Conscripting all citizens results in participants who are motivated and physically trained for the job. Mariah Louku said, "universal conscription enhances the relationship between the military and society because it creates a perception of burden-sharing that is a defining factor for morale."⁹⁶ Additionally, Norwegian Chief of Defense, Admiral Haakon Bruun-Hanssen, said, "the new law means equal rights and duties for men and women...now we have twice as many people to choose from. This will make it easier to direct motivated personnel and the right expertise to our different tasks and positions."⁹⁷ Recruiting from the entirety of the population advances the talent pool and heightens the odds of employing the right man or woman for the job.

⁹³ Mariah Loukou, "Expeditions with MCUP: How Can the United States Move toward Gender-Neutral Special Forces?: Lessons from the Norwegian Military," Marine Corps University, November 2, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.36304/ExpwMCUP.2020.06>.

⁹⁴ Elisabeth Braw, "Norway's Gender-Neutral Draft," War on the Rocks, June 23, 2016, <https://warontherocks.com/2016/06/norways-gender-neutral-draft/>.

⁹⁵ Drew Desilver, "Fewer than a Third of Countries Currently Have a Military Draft; Most Exclude Women," Pew Research Center, April 23, 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/04/23/fewer-than-a-third-of-countries-currently-have-a-military-draft-most-exclude-women/>.

⁹⁶ Loukou, "Expeditions with MCUP."

⁹⁷ Gordon B. Dahl, Andreas Kotsadam, and Dan-Olof Rooth, *Does Integration Change Gender Attitudes? The Effect of Randomly Assigning Women to Traditionally Male Teams*, IZA DP No. 11323 (Bonn, Germany: IZA Institute of Labor Economics, 2018), 7.

Universal conscription made it possible to employ and enlist more qualified women for Norway's Special Forces teams and mixed-gender platoons. Enlisting women into elite Special Forces was one of Norway's unique strategies to retain and recruit more women and advertise women's worth to the international community. Recruiting qualified women through mandatory selective service also assisted with Norwegian defense objectives to carry out territorial defense and border security that utilized females in missions and operations differently than their male counterparts to ensure continuous national control.⁹⁸ Moreover, selective service exposes more females to military life and advertises to other nations that a woman's career in the armed forces is not only attainable but also beneficial.⁹⁹ Norway has pioneered the way toward equal opportunity with its implementation of an all-gender draft, which reduced any restrictions to women's roles and rights in the military. Additional Norwegian retention strategies include unisex barracks, all-female training programs, mixed-gender units, and employing females in the highest levels of Norwegian military leadership.¹⁰⁰ Currently, Norwegian debates remain largely focused on integrating women numerically, rather than focused on gender specific disparities, such as physical or mental capabilities.

Mixed-gender units are a mathematically efficient way to increase women's participation and enhance gender equality in the Norwegian military. To sum up an article titled, "Norway's Radical Experiment," the Norwegians created a 50/50 mixed-gender unit in which both sexes carried out the same duties, experienced the same coed-living arrangements, and met the same physical standards to enhance gender equality concepts.¹⁰¹ When compared to other units that were not 50 percent mixed-gendered, the results led to better cohesion and less sexually harassed units. Nina Hellum, social anthropologist who studied these units for more than two years reported:

⁹⁸ Loukou, "Expeditions with MCUP."

⁹⁹ Gustavsen, "Equal Treatment or Equal Opportunity?," 364.

¹⁰⁰ Meg Trucano et al., *Foreign Military Strategies to Recruit and Retain Women: Response to DACOWITS RFI 3* (Arlington, VA: Insight Policy Research, 2017), 15, <https://dacowits.defense.gov/Portals/48/Documents/General%20Documents/RFI%20Docs/March2017/Insight%20RFI%203.pdf?ver=2017-03-17-113845-857>.

¹⁰¹ Elisabeth Braw, "Norway's Radical Military Experiment," *Foreign Affairs*, January 19, 2017, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/norway/2017-01-19/norways-radical-military-experiment>.

such exposure leads to enhanced understanding and tolerance between the sexes, in addition to reducing stereotypical biases and sexual tension. We do not see any signs of a dominating masculinity culture in the Battalion, and the unit reported little or no sexual harassment. The Battalion's own survey also indicates a high level of well-being and contentment, which correlates well with our research material in this study.¹⁰²

This progressive integration plan helped to bridge the exclusion gap of women. Females reported they felt more socially included by their male peers and did not experience any biases usually formed when men and women are segregated. Nina Rones pointed out, "positive cases became so because the leadership concerned really wanted to make their radical ideas on female integration a success...their authority to regulate dysfunctional relationships between groups of soldiers, classify women as wanted and important, and produce a positive narrative on women in their unit."¹⁰³ Overall, with the support of Norwegian leadership, this policy innovation shifted traditional Norwegian culture norms and aided in a gender-equal atmosphere where sex was no longer significant.

Mixed-gender units certainly bring an inimitable and distinctive perspective to the battlefield, and with special operations being in high demand over the last decade, adding diversity to the fight was a decision well respected within the Norwegian military. The average Norwegian male attitude toward women in combat and special operations roles exuded support and described women as "better multi-taskers, better thinkers and [those who] have tougher mentalities."¹⁰⁴ Women are not only welcomed but they are also favored in certain missions and operations, particularly within Norwegian Special Forces. In this connection, Norwegian Naval Special Operations Commando (NORSOC) has an informal, collective, and egalitarian way of decision making at all levels and have met the demands of the 21st century by including more female integration into special

¹⁰² Nina Hellum, *A Study of Even Gender Distribution among Privates in the Air Defense Battalion on Ørland*, FFI-RAPPORT 16/01923 (Kjeller, Norway: Norwegian Defense Research Establishment, 2016), 4, <https://publications.ffi.no/nb/item/asset/dspace:2640/16-01923.pdf>.

¹⁰³ Nina Rones, "Gender-Mixed Army Dorm Rooms, 50% Women and All-Female Special Forces Training," *Res Militaris* 7, no. 2 (Summer–Autumn 2017): 26.

¹⁰⁴ Gustavsen, "Equal Treatment or Equal Opportunity?," 364.

operations.¹⁰⁵ For example, in 2014, NORSOC decided to create an all-female Special Forces unit called Jegertruppen that received international recognition. According to Jessica Turnley et al., gender integrating and diverse teams operating in austere environments may have an effect on mission achievement and approach tasks differently, which is an asset, and with Norway's all-female SOF team, this unit may be a forerunner of future developments.¹⁰⁶ Norwegian SOF is playing to its strengths and utilizing diversity to broaden skills and talents to tackle future conflict endeavors.

SOF components have been in high demand over the past two decades and added diversity to the battlefield has been shown to enhance operational effectiveness toward meeting the demands of 21st century conflicts. NORSOC saw an operational need for female operators to be able to communicate directly with women of different cultural backgrounds and gather intelligence while building international relations in austere locations prohibited to men.¹⁰⁷ Jegertruppen was created during Operation Enduring Freedom in 2001, and was based on the all-male SOF unit called Fallskeermjegertruppen.¹⁰⁸ Jegertruppen's training, physical standards tests, and operational requirements were the same as the male troop; however, while on patrol, women carried a 60-pound ruck pack, while the men carried an additional 20 pounds of weight. Unlike the mixed-gender troops, this segregated approach was deemed a successful way to integrate women, bridge gaps in female recruitment, and attract and select highly capable and dedicated female talent.¹⁰⁹ A professor from the Swedish Defense University said it best, "for countries that need to beef up their share of female fighters, 50/50 units and full gender integration is the best way forward...they should focus on selected units

¹⁰⁵ Jessica Glicklen Turnley, Kobi Mikha'el, and Eyal Ben-Ari, eds., *Special Operations Forces in the 21st Century: Perspectives from the Social Sciences*, Cass Military Studies (London; New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2018), 6.

¹⁰⁶ Turnley, Mikha'el, and Ben-Ari, 288.

¹⁰⁷ Joshua Singaas, "Jegertroppen: A Bridging Strategy toward Female Integration into United States Army Special Forces" (master's thesis, University of Omaha Nebraska, 2016), 29, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/AD1084593.pdf>.

¹⁰⁸ James Kiras, Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen, and Nicolaj Juul Nielsen, "Introduction: Recruiting and Organizing to Meet Future SOF Challenges," *Special Operations Journal* 5, no. 1 (January 2, 2019): 1–5, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23296151.2019.1581423>.

¹⁰⁹ Kiras, Dalgaard-Nielsen, and Nielsen, 4.

where you can really raise the female share, rather than putting a few women here and there.”¹¹⁰ This all-female unit broke a patriarchal structural barrier that ultimately changed culture and enhanced mission effectiveness. It is important to show women not only achieving the same tasks as men, but also surpassing men’s abilities and succeeding in what society labels a male-dominating career path. Women are up for the same challenges, and are mentally and physically accomplishing the same missions as their male counterparts.

The successes and the failures of this all-female troop had little to do with standards and more to do with recruitment. According to Braw, “only time will tell whether Jegertruppen’s relative recruiting and training success with all-female units will translate to mixed-gender combat.”¹¹¹ The advantages of this segregated system of training are interoperability, mission readiness, and unit cohesion.¹¹² This all-female unit is currently meeting the demands of what makes a Special Forces team effective, and is certainly an irreplaceable niche. Jegertruppen has since received international recognition for its female talent that will surely add to Norway’s recruitment strategies. This all-female troop has received rave reviews, and for this reason, some nations, including commanders at the U.S. Special Operations Command, are looking to the Norwegian Armed Forces as an innovator when it comes to testing military practice, and have already contacted Defense Minister Kristoffersen about Jegertruppen for possible future implementation.¹¹³ Even Italy’s then Defense Minister, Giampaolo Di Paola, was interested in the troop and was highly intrigued by a team of this stature stating, “it’s better to have women in greater numbers in certain units rather than spread them thinly everywhere.”¹¹⁴ Employing women in higher numbers is an advertising recruitment technique that illustrates the critical mass theory. This theory yields the desired number of personnel required to affect policy that constructs favorable

¹¹⁰ Braw, “Norway’s Radical Military Experiment.”

¹¹¹ Elisabeth Braw, “Norway’s ‘Hunter Troop,’” February 8, 2016, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/norway/2016-02-08/norways-hunter-troop>.

¹¹² Singaas, “Jegertroppen,” 48.

¹¹³ Braw, “Norway’s ‘Hunter Troop.’”

¹¹⁴ Braw, “Norway’s Radical Military Experiment.”

change, not as the token but as an influential body.¹¹⁵ A critical mass needs larger numbers for any level of acceptance. This theory aided Norway in breaching remaining structural recruiting obstacles that denote gender imbalances within the Norwegian Armed Forces and assisted in advancing innovated ideas that broaden diversity.

Even with these new recruiting strategies and measures in place, Norway did not attain its desired female recruitment and retainment numbers for fiscal year 2020. Norwegian military leaders aimed to have women represent 20 percent of the force by December 2020; however, the current percentage of females in service is 19 percent.¹¹⁶ The Norwegian Armed Forces continues to be competitive with employees in the labor market and educational opportunities in the civilian sector. Currently, Norwegian forces have not taken any initiatives for educational advancements for women.¹¹⁷ In addition, veteran benefits are negligible.¹¹⁸ Additionally, the military continues to illustrate that both service to country and family life are feasible for a female officer under the current structure and guidance; however, even with Norway's push toward creating a more gender-neutral military, establishing a framework that welcomes both work life and family life has been difficult for the Norwegian Armed Forces to achieve.¹¹⁹ Women take on the larger quantity of work done at home when compared to men, work that is needed to maintain a standard of living for not only the children but for the husband. Maintaining a military career while simultaneously handling home life for a female officer remains difficult, and because women face greater obstacles at home, women are more likely to leave service

¹¹⁵ Rosabeth Moss Kanter, "Some Effects of Proportions on Group Life: Skewed Sex Ratios and Responses to Token Women," *American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 5 (March 1977): 965–90, <https://doi.org/10.1086/226425>.

¹¹⁶ Benedicte Brandvold, "Recruiting and Retaining Women in the Armed Forces—The Cases of Canada, Sweden and Norway" (master's thesis, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, 2013), abstract, https://nmbu.brage.unit.no/nmbu-xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/187955/brandvold_master2013.pdf?sequence=7&isAllowed=y; "Norwegian Armed Forces in Numbers," Norwegian Armed Forces, updated October 21, 2020, <https://www.forsvaret.no/en/about-us/armed-forces-in-numbers>.

¹¹⁷ Brandvold, 70.

¹¹⁸ Brandvold, 8.

¹¹⁹ Brandvold, 8.

earlier than males to avoid family separation or loss of stability.¹²⁰ Plans and procedures to assist married couples, family, and retired veterans have been established, but they are minimal and require a certain number of years in service to receive the benefits.

In sum, through consensual decision making, the strong role of the Norwegian government created gender-mainstreaming concepts that produced a high gender egalitarian culture. These concepts were embedded throughout society and within the Norwegian military, which created equal visibility, empowerment, and the participation of both sexes. In time, a gender-neutral military formed that the international community currently looks to for progressive policies initiatives. These innovative policy practices, recruitment, and retainment tools that enlist the brightest, most capable people, regardless of sexual orientation, race or gender, is one to emulate.

C. ANALYSIS

Norway's history is significant in that it paints a picture of the seamless evolution of women's rights and gender equality. Norway is a prime example of an enabling culture, which unconventionally aided in the addition of women in the parliament, boardrooms, and its military using gender quotas and gender equality concepts driven by leaders. Once a gender-balance parliament was established, this consensual decision-making approach created a nation that was not only culturally aware, but it also eliminated culture-sensitive policies and activities that produced unbiased outcomes of inclusiveness.

Military leaders successfully implemented societal gender mainstreaming concepts and policy innovations that shifted traditional norms and assisted in using women in military service and combat positions. Innovated policies, such as coed dormitories and mixed gender units, were implemented to modify biases and discriminations against military women and create a gender-neutral environment for both sexes.¹²¹ Furthermore, obligatory service was made mandatory for women in 2015, which was used as a recruitment technique to advance diversity on the battlefield and to assist better with

¹²⁰ Brandvold, 75.

¹²¹ Rones, "Gender-Mixed Army Dorm Rooms," 4.

creating a gender-balanced environment. Additionally, conscription expanded the talent pool of women, which attracted more females into combat specialties, such as combat artillery, combat tank, and elite Special Forces. Norway was ranked the second most gender-equal country in the world because of its liberal approaches and gender-neutral initiatives.¹²² The Norwegian military has been the foundational example of how to implement women in combat roles effectively and equally over the last two decades.

D. CONCLUSION

Due to the rare structural, cultural, and political factors within the Norwegian armed forces and throughout its region, the inclusion and method of integrating women into combat roles has not only been different but effective, and has proceeded at a faster rate when compared to other NATO countries. The Norwegian experience, and attitudes within Norway's armed forces, illustrates that societal change is dependent on affirmative legislative action and leadership initiatives toward gender equality.¹²³ Indeed, these progressive egalitarian strategies, governed by the Norwegian Parliament, removed structural and cultural obstacles in Norway to form a highly recognized gender-balance military. The Norwegian Armed Forces' radical innovative recruitment and retainment strategies established strong solidarity and social inclusion among armed forces members regardless of sexual orientation, gender, or race.

Norway's gender-neutral concepts created a framework that countries in Latin America could emulate. Realistically, following Norway's approach would require a matriarchy of female leadership ultimately to drive cultural change, and Latin America currently has the female political empowerment support within the region's legislatures.¹²⁴ Through policy reforms, these Latin American female leaders would challenge traditional societal norms and assist in creating a gender-neutral climate. Applying gender-neutral terms, gender mainstreaming methods, and policies throughout a region will take time; however, once implemented, gender gaps of equality could potentially close at a rate most

¹²² Schwab et al., *Global Gender Gap Report 2020 Insight Report*, 6.

¹²³ Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Achieving Gender Equality*, 96.

¹²⁴ *Americas Quarterly*, "NEW AQ."

Nordic countries have experienced, versus the rate in which Latin American countries are currently closing their gender gaps.¹²⁵ In addition, the international approach toward gender-equality efforts through UNSCR 1325 is, at its core, a method to enhance the security of women in countries with conflict. Accordingly, increasing women's employment opportunities in militaries and assisting in the safekeeping of women will reduce gender gaps in equality to create a path toward peace and stability. However, for Latin American countries to succeed in its implementation of women into the combat roles, building a gender-balance military through the removal of biases toward women and other gender identities, along with eliminating the depiction of the machismo culture, is important, and can be done with female representation and officials who support such endeavors.

¹²⁵ Schwab et al., *Global Gender Gap Report 2020 Insight Report*, 8.

III. THE ISRAELI EXPERIENCE WITH INTEGRATING WOMEN INTO COMBAT POSITIONS

Israel's geographic location, national defense strategies, and societal factors deliberately influenced the integration of women into combat roles, which differs significantly from the other country case studies in this thesis. Israel's case is special, as it positively demonstrates to the international community how effective women can be when utilized in mixed-gender units, light combat battalions, and border security that portray women as tough, indispensable, and desirable in specialties some countries still label masculine. For more than seven decades, Israel has made gender equality its primary mission not only in society but also within the Israeli Defense Force (IDF); yet, women still face cultural barriers that prohibit them from advancing into elite Special Forces billets, which has resulted in a moderate level of female integration into combat positions.¹²⁶ Since major cultural factors and religious chasms divide the Jewish population within the borders of Israel, the two flavors of Israeli nationalism—the egalitarian leftists versus the Orthodox conservatives—will forever face differences over reaching a compromise on female integration into combat roles.¹²⁷ Ultra-Orthodox communities believe that societal values will never trump the Torah, and lines will never be crossed no matter how unjust they may seem to modern sensibilities.¹²⁸ Nevertheless, a culture that encompasses an ideology where all citizens are considered equal, despite some pockets of resistance from the different sects of Judaism, has affected the desire and recruitment of women into the Israeli Defense Army, which has also created a healthier gender-balanced military and society.

¹²⁶ Idit Shafran Gittleman, "Women's Service in the IDF: Between a 'People's Army' and Gender Equality," *The Israel Democracy Institute*, November 10, 2020, <https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/norway-introduces-compulsory-military-service-for-women-bunking-them-in-mixed-dorms>.

¹²⁷ David Masci and Kelsey Jo Starr, "In Israel, Jews Are United by Homeland but Divided into Very Different Groups," Pew Research Center, March 8, 2016, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/03/08/in-israel-jews-are-united-by-homeland-but-divided-into-very-different-groups/>.

¹²⁸ Harry Maryles, "Orthodox Judaism—Fully Egalitarian? Impossible!," *The Times of Israel* (blog), February 14, 2018, <http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/orthodox-judaism-fully-egalitarian-impossible/>.

Israel's strategies in border security and using women in the military could assist countries in Latin America more so than could the other country case studies in this thesis. Most aggressions on the Israeli border are "kinetic conflicts with its geographic neighbors, a reality that gives the military a different place in society than those countries who are primarily involved in operations abroad."¹²⁹ While Latin American border threats are nowhere near as existential as what Israel faces, similar transnational non-state actor threats, sex trafficking issues, and drug smuggling interdiction uniquely parallels the two regions. Yet, Israel utilizes women to its tactical advantage to tightly secure the Israeli border, while Latin American countries currently neglect to use women in combat security functions.¹³⁰ Although women have been recruited to fight as revolutionaries in battles in countries like Nicaragua and Colombia, barriers still exist to women's integration into military and combat roles in all but one country in Latin America.¹³¹ Israel's unique implementation and use of women in combat specialties may provide the best direction and measures for Latin American militaries, since these regions are mostly similar in regional security and border conflict.

The role of women in Israeli defense cannot be understood without considering historical, social, and religious facts first, such as Judaism. Israeli Jews self-identify with one of four sects of Judaism: Haredim (ultra-Orthodox), Datiim (religious), Masortim (traditional), and Hilonim (secular); Hilonim is by far the largest sect.¹³² The different sects of Judaism play a vital role in women's participation within the military and are addressed throughout this chapter. The chapter opens with the history of Israel-Palestine (1900 to present day), which is important information to highlight due to various scholarly misconceptions on the integration of women into combat roles. The challenges and achievements of female implementation into the Israeli Army that led to women in combat roles and a mixed-gender IDF follows. These factors and attainments continued well into

¹²⁹ Hunter, *Shoulder to Shoulder Yet Worlds Apart*, 17.

¹³⁰ "Female Fighters Filling the Ranks of Israeli Border Police Troops," June 21, 2020, ILTV Israel News, video, 2:06, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_d0oB38Ty0.

¹³¹ Tornaghi, "Why It's Essential to Have More Women in Latin American's Militaries."

¹³² Masci and Jo Starr, "In Israel, Jews Are United by Homeland but Divided into Very Different Groups."

the 21st century; however, not all combat roles are available to women, a situation that continues to limit most female captains and lieutenant colonels from promotion, and certainly goes against Israel's gender equality philosophy.¹³³

A. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

War often encourages a country to utilize all available manpower, including females; the United States and Norway are prime examples. Israel, however, has been employing women in its military strategy and defense for centuries, regardless of war. Israel's roots date back to the first decade of the 20th century, where "the majority of people dwelling in the region were Palestinians-Arabs who lived in what was known as Palestine."¹³⁴ Palestine established its first initial defense organization called Hashomer in 1909 that was known for its employment of women, though the demands of equal participation were questioned. The women of Hashomer were internationally recognized and proved to the world that equal status within everyday society and Palestine defense was important, which set the precedent for future female roles in the military.¹³⁵ Years later, when Israel was part of British-owned Palestine (1918–1949), Haganah—the undeviating link from Hashomer—was a secret organization established in 1930 that lasted until WWII.¹³⁶ With limited information found due to the nature of this unit's work, Haganah recruited women at a young age based on their level of maturity and their handling of sensitive information. The women of Haganah were trained in first aid and communications and were taught techniques in transmitting information. They used carrier pigeons and strung wires for telephone connections, and often operated clandestinely in dangerous missions, such as personal message carriers.¹³⁷ Even though only a minimal

¹³³ Gideon Allon, "'The IDF Must Allow Women to Apply to All Roles,'" *Israel Hayom*, August 31, 2020, <https://www.israelhayom.com/2020/08/31/the-idf-must-allow-women-to-apply-to-all-roles/>.

¹³⁴ Julie Marks, "Gaza: The History That Fuels the Conflict," *History*, May 30, 2018, <https://www.history.com/news/gaza-conflict-history-israel-palestine>.

¹³⁵ Anne Bloom, *Israel: The Longest War. In Female Soldiers-Combatants or Non-Combatants? Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Westport, CT: Nancy Loring Goldman, 1982), 140.

¹³⁶ Bloom, 140.

¹³⁷ The carrying of messages was a difficult and dangerous job, which often led to conflict. Bloom, 142.

number of women were recruited, the women of Hashomer and Haganah were enlisted for their talents, regardless of gender.

It was not until WWII that Palestine saw an excessive number of women enlist in the army. The Jews in Palestine had allied themselves with the British to fight against Nazism, which required Haganah to grow in size; its membership now included every available Jewish man and woman.¹³⁸ Palestinian Jewish women were even recruited into Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS), a British component, because the British were more reluctant to send its own women to the Middle East.¹³⁹ The recruitment of Palestinian women into ATS caused a stir among the Jewish community, since society created a protective arm around Palestinian women and viewed them as “ones to defend not ones that defend themselves.”¹⁴⁰ Society labeled these women adventure-seekers who were often ostracized by their families, in part because it was assumed that they joined the war only to catch a husband.¹⁴¹ Even with push back from members of the Jewish Labor in Palestine, women had a desire to join, and Palestine continued to employ them in medical roles, border security, and then welcomed them into an assault company known as Palmach. The women of Palmach were integrated into the assault teams in an attempt to try to absorb more females into the military framework. The Palmach became home to many boys and girls ready to live out “the duty of the organization,” and become trendsetters of their age group and strengthen their Palestinian homeland.¹⁴²

A separate Jewish military group called the Irgun is worth noting, since 20 percent of its force was made up of women.¹⁴³ This organization was established in 1931; however, once WWII started, Jewish Irgun fighters emerged more frequently since the British were their main enemy. Women Irgun fighters served in combat units and although

¹³⁸ Reuven Gal, *A Portrait of the Israeli Soldier, Contributions in Military Studies*, no. 52 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986), 6.

¹³⁹ Bloom, *Israel: The Longest War*, 145.

¹⁴⁰ Bloom, 145.

¹⁴¹ David Jerome, *Examining War and Conflict around the World* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2019), 55.

¹⁴² Bloom, *Israel: The Longest War*, 147.

¹⁴³ Bloom, 148.

the male Irgun fighters felt it was dangerous to put women in direct fire, women still risked their lives and participated in combat duty.¹⁴⁴ In late 1947, just after the United Nations split Palestine into an Arab and Jewish state, David Ben-Gurion—Israel’s first Prime Minister—created a new defense force with a goal to construct a professional and depoliticized army based on a British model.¹⁴⁵ Prime Minister Gurion found it necessary to separate and remove all political and ideological aspects inherited by each military organization (Haganah, Irgun, and Palmach), and assemble a new force under the direction of one political structure.¹⁴⁶ The establishment of the IDF came at the turn of the 20th century on May 26, 1948, just 12 days after the birth of the new state of Israel and in the midst of the War of Independence.¹⁴⁷ Gurion’s aspiration was a people’s army with one clear vision, equality for all Israeli citizens through mandatory conscription. Adopted in 1949, the Israeli Defence Service Law dictates all Jewish men and women who have reached the age of 18 are liable for conscription for 24 to 36 months of military service in peacetime, as well as wartime, followed by reserve service.¹⁴⁸

The Israeli female warfighter can be divided into three historical timeframes: (1) In 1948, Israeli female fighters in direct fire and front-line status during the War of Independence, (2) post-War of Independence to the late 1990s, when women were banned from all combat related billets, and (3) in 1994, when all major combat positions re-opened to women, to include pilots and light combat units.¹⁴⁹ However, scholars have mixed assessments on what actually occurred during these timeframes. The argument around the extent and nature of women’s participation is not a new development; these arguments existed within Yishuv (the Jewish population in pre-Israel Palestine) and continued

¹⁴⁴ Bloom, 149.

¹⁴⁵ Bloom, 152.

¹⁴⁶ Amos Perlmutter, “The Israeli Army in Politics: The Persistence of the Civilian over the Military,” *World Politics* 20, no. 4 (1968): 620, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2009686>.

¹⁴⁷ Gal, *A Portrait of the Israeli Soldier*, 1.

¹⁴⁸ Gal, 48.

¹⁴⁹ Jason Levine, “Women of Israel Defense Forces: History in Combat Units,” Jewish Virtual Library, 2016, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/history-of-women-in-idf-combat-units>.

uninterrupted until the state was established.¹⁵⁰ Even today, arguments pertaining to the need for women in direct fire and on the front lines are disputed.

Martin van Creveld, author of *Not that Dangerous, Women in the Israeli Military*, described how women were banned from all combat units after females were slaughtered and cut into pieces just before the war began. He claimed, “the participation of Israeli women in combat during the War of Independence is largely a legend.”¹⁵¹ Reuven Gal, author of *A Portrait of an Israel Soldier*, alleged that Israeli women were directly involved in guerrilla warfare and participated in combat operations.¹⁵² Even though a small percent of women died during this war, they have nevertheless generated a vast and long-lasting mythical lore about Israeli combat women fighting on the front lines.¹⁵³ Professor Judy Schwartz, who headed the School of Basic Jewish Studies, claimed women were in combat roles and fought on the front lines in 1948; however, they were removed from combat positions after the War of Independence due to women’s corpses being abused.¹⁵⁴ This type of abuse is culturally unacceptable. In lieu of these varied historical findings and scholarly debates, the consensus is that since the establishment of the first defense force Hoshomer, Israeli women were employed in combat roles. A lot of research suggests that females participated within the IDF prior to and during the War of Independence, and then were banned from all combat related positions within the IDF post-independence for religious factors.

In the small nation of Israel, Israeli Jews are united by the homeland, but were divided into very diverse Jewish sects. These sects have argued for years over women’s equality and the need for females in the IDF.¹⁵⁵ Anne Bloom wrote, “at the source of this

¹⁵⁰ Bloom, *Israel: The Longest War*, 137.

¹⁵¹ Martin van Creveld, “Armed but Not Dangerous: Women in the Israeli Military,” *War in History* 7, no. 1 (January 1, 2000): 87, <https://doi.org/10.1177/096834450000700105>.

¹⁵² Gal, *A Portrait of the Israeli Soldier*, 54.

¹⁵³ Gal, 43.

¹⁵⁴ Gili Cohen, “Israeli Woman Who Broke Barriers Downed by Hezbollah Rocket as 2006 Combat Volunteer,” *Haaretz*, October 5, 2016, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/the-sole-woman-killed-in-the-second-lebanon-war-was-on-volunteer-combat-duty-1.5381998>.

¹⁵⁵ Masci and Jo Starr, “In Israel, Jews Are United by Homeland but Divided into Very Different Groups.”

process is the traditional cultural separation of the two worlds of men and women. Without the guidance of a clear policy their role has evolved, more of process than of planned conception.”¹⁵⁶ It is fascinating, however, that these debates have continued for this long, given the traditional Jewish sect treats men and women equally and both genders are considered very important to the Jewish family household. A woman is not considered secondary to a man according to traditional Judaism, Bloom said, “no man is complete without a wife; no woman is complete without a husband. For each individual the ideal center of gravity is not in himself, but in the whole of which he is an essential part.”¹⁵⁷ Regardless of women’s roles in society, and what this sect of Judaism depicts, Israeli women had a hard time winning over their equal status to men and fought to sustain their roles in combat. Nevertheless, female positions in the IDF became a heightened religious controversy after the War of Independence, and despite Gurion’s stance on equal opportunity, the IDF disbanded Israeli women and terminated their combat roles. The underlying reason for the opposition to women in combat, Bloom wrote, was socially, morally, and culturally unfavorable.¹⁵⁸ The thought of seeing a woman’s dead body on the front lines was ethically unthinkable and the expulsion of women in combat certainly suggested limitations to the idea everyone being equal.

Even with the removal of women from designated combat positions, women were still indispensable in other billets within the IDF. The Israeli government began to draft women alongside their male counterparts after the War of Independence, due to a manpower shortage and to maximize its fighting force.¹⁵⁹ Israel is among only a few other countries that conscripts women into its military under a mandatory draft law; key among these countries and relevant to this thesis are Bolivia and Norway. Gurion stated, “since you rightly believe that the security of the state must be pursued night and day, I want you to know that security will not exist if our nation’s women do not know how to fight. We

¹⁵⁶ Bloom, *Israel: The Longest War*, 137.

¹⁵⁷ Bloom, 138.

¹⁵⁸ Bloom, 152.

¹⁵⁹ Gal, *A Portrait of the Israeli Soldier*, 47.

are few—and our enemies are many.”¹⁶⁰ The two justifications that then Prime Minister Gurion gave in his proposal to draft women were, drafting both men and women expressed gender and social equality, and mandatory service for both genders fulfilled Israel’s border security requirements.¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, even though the central theme on including women into the draft pertained to gender equality, female participation was still restricted in combat, since these specialties were not perceived as feminine and it was considered unethical to place a woman in direct fire.¹⁶² Additionally, Israel’s first female prime minister—Golda Meir—was elected in 1969; however, it would take roughly 30 years until combat positions would again be made available to women. Culturally, Israel and its Jewish state were not ready to see women wearing combat boots participating in frontline action.

It is thought provoking that the 1973 Yom Kippur War, followed by the Israeli-Lebanese conflict in 1982, did not call for a restructuring of the IDF security forces to include women in its combat ranks. Pronounced gender inequalities pertaining to the need to have women on the frontlines occurred during this time and women were excluded from “three primary tasks of warfare: military defense, civil administration and military production.”¹⁶³ Even the 1987 Intifada with continual Palestine riots against the Israeli corruption of the West bank in Gaza did not entice the IDF to incorporate women into its border security units. The opening of more roles, such as airplane mechanic and communication specialties, came after the war to build up its troops and free men from positions on the home front, which enabled women to participate in roles that, until then, had only been available to men.¹⁶⁴ Additional measures were taken to progress toward a more egalitarian IDF when an amendment was made to the Israeli Selective Service Law that removed verbiage listing the specialties and positions closed to women.

In 1994, a woman named Alice Miller challenged military cultural norms and sued the Israeli Army for her right to apply for an elite pilot’s course that at the time was only

¹⁶⁰ Jerome, *Examining War and Conflict around the World*, 55.

¹⁶¹ Gittleman, “Women’s Service in the IDF.”

¹⁶² Gittleman.

¹⁶³ Gittleman.

¹⁶⁴ Gittleman.

available to men.¹⁶⁵ Miller made history when the Israeli Supreme Court ruled in her favor and considered the ban on female recruits to the aviation community unconstitutional. It is nevertheless reasonable to conclude that civil society progressed at a faster rate than the IDF regarding women's participation, since Miller's lawsuit assisted in the opening of various combat units previously unavailable to women. According to Shafran Gittleman, "the IDF began to integrate women into its ranks not only as a function of defense and security needs, but also based on the commitment to the principle of equality."¹⁶⁶ The Israeli military integrated women into combat roles in 1948, and then disbanded them for various religious and cultural reasons until the government amended the Israeli Military Service Law in 2000, stating, "The right of women to serve in any role in the IDF is equal to the right of men."¹⁶⁷ Following this ruling, 14 other communities under the description of light combat would be made available to women. In 2000, Israel saw its first mixed-gender combat unit known as Caracal, along with female combat soldiers in the Artillery Corps, Combat Rescue and Evacuation and Airborne Medicine Unit.¹⁶⁸ However, even with the gender equality strides Miller made within the IDF, as of today, not all combat billets are made available to women. Roughly, 92 percent of combat positions are accessible to Israeli women, while the residual eight percent Special Forces billets remain forbidden to females.¹⁶⁹

In sum, Israel has experienced the most unique route of all the Western militaries regarding its integration of women into combat roles due to cultural disparities and religious considerations necessitated by Jewish law. A fundamental obedience toward traditional values still persists throughout the region, with policies and procedures driven by societal norms and institutional factors. Israel currently leads Middle Eastern and

¹⁶⁵ "Israeli Woman Pilot Sues to Fly Combat," *Minerva's Bulletin Board* VII, no. 3 (December 31, 1994): 6.

¹⁶⁶ Gittleman, "Women's Service in the IDF."

¹⁶⁷ Levine, "Women of Israel Defense Forces"; Bloom, *Israel: The Longest War*, 138.

¹⁶⁸ Gittleman, "Women's Service in the IDF."

¹⁶⁹ Judah Ari Gross, "New Combat Positions for Women in the IDF, Same Old Obstacles," *The Times of Israel*, March 13, 2016, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/new-combat-positions-for-women-in-the-idf-same-old-obstacles/>.

Northern African countries in gender parity, and prohibits discrimination under the gender equality bill instated in 1951.¹⁷⁰ Nevertheless, despite this law, Israel lags in achieving 100 percent egalitarian rights within the IDF due to restrictions still enforced toward female participation in elite combat units and Special Forces.

B. MODERATE LEVEL OF FEMALE INTEGRATION: CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The IDF still lags in attaining 100 percent equality, since elite Special Forces roles remain forbidden to women. Religious tradition seems to be one of the most significant challenges to overcoming this last obstacle. Israel's most devout religious group Hardei (ultra-Orthodox) mandates the separation of men and women in certain aspects within the army, which obstructs mixed-gender combat units if Hardei men join them.¹⁷¹ Nevertheless, Israel has allowed women in light combat units since 2000, a move that has strengthened the IDF in both defense and security. Academics have observed that these female combatants often exhibit superior discipline, motivation, alertness, and shooting abilities, characteristics that have long been associated more with men than with women.¹⁷² Indeed, Israel has maintained a culturally positive egalitarian approach with its attempt to allow women in the IDF, which has led to the successful integration of women into light combat units and border patrol teams. Thus, if national culture conveys little hegemonic masculinity, and genuinely and equally supports women in society, and its military, then the likelihood of success for female integration into combat-related specialties is high.

Israel's first success was the mandatory draft of both genders, which promoted egalitarianism within its forces and throughout society. According to Stuart Cohen, "this militia-style service system was said to have endowed the IDF with the character of 'a

¹⁷⁰ Schwab et al., *Global Gender Gap Report 2020 Insight Report*, 26.

¹⁷¹ Jewish men and women who belong to the Hardei sect are excused from military service; however, if they wish to participate within the IDF, they are allowed to enlist. Elran and Sheffer, *Military Service in Israel*, 77.

¹⁷² Paul Cawkill et al., *Women in Ground Close Combat Roles: The Experiences of Other Nations and a Review of the Academic Literature* (Porton Down, Wiltshire, United Kingdom: Defence Science and Technology Laboratory UK, 2009), 25.

people's army', and the universal draft system justified the classification of Israeli society as a paradigmatic nation in arms."¹⁷³ Due to Israel's pre-state discrimination and persecution against women, the state's founders heightened the concern of group prejudices and included an appreciation for the equal treatment of women within Israel's Declaration of Independence that categorized "sex" as a group classification.¹⁷⁴ For years, Israel has carried out these avowals and has lived by the words of the first prime minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion. He promised to "uphold the full social and political equality of all its citizens, without distinction of race, creed or sex."¹⁷⁵ He then drafted all available human resources into the IDF to protect and defend the nation of Israel.

The effective implementation of a compulsory recruitment system for both men and women created a societal belief that protecting and defending the country of Israel was a right and a duty performed by all. The Israeli Defence Service Law dictates all Jewish men and women who have reached the age of 18 be conscripted, with only a few stipulations.¹⁷⁶ The majority of the Defence Service Law equates men and women as equals; however, women are exempt from service if they are married or are mothers, and their service time is shorter than men's; both men and women of the ultra-Orthodox community are excused from military obligations, but are allowed to join should they desire to do so.¹⁷⁷ Nevertheless, a growing number of religious Orthodox females want to serve in the IDF, and they are pursuing careers in co-ed infantry units and front-line combat positions. According to a recent article published by *Jewish Rhode Island*, "in 2010, 935 Orthodox women enlisted and in 2017, 2,700 did—out of a pool of about 8,000 women eligible for service in the reported drafting round...and, more and more Orthodox women are enlisting in the military, to the extent which led us to decide that we must take this into account and

¹⁷³ Stuart Cohen, "Dilemmas of Military Service in Israel: The Religious Dimension," *The Torah U-Madda Journal* 12 (2004): 1.

¹⁷⁴ Frances Raday, "Equality, Religion and Gender in Israel: Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia," Jewish Women's Archive, February 27, 2009, <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/equality-religion-and-gender-in-israel>.

¹⁷⁵ Alex Rubner, *The Economy of Israel: A Critical Account of the First Ten Years* (London: Frank Cass and Company LTD, 1960), 286.

¹⁷⁶ Gal, *A Portrait of the Israeli Soldier*, 48.

¹⁷⁷ Bloom, *Israel: The Longest War*, 152.

create roles and an overall environment that would reflect the women's needs.”¹⁷⁸ Israel is one of a few countries that conscripts its females into service and is obligated to amend rules and regulations to accommodate the female gender better.

On the contrary, the Israeli government has considered mandatory conscription to members of the Haredi sect, which raises multiple concerns and challenges, such as the observance of certain Jewish holidays that could potentially conflict with IDF missions.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, ultra-Orthodox men must be separated from women since the Haredi sect forbids men and women from communicating in social settings.¹⁸⁰ Those men will be placed in all-male units, while the women are segregated into troops with men who are not religious.¹⁸¹ Although allowed, the Orthodox community frowns upon women who want to serve, and families often abandon their daughters if they pursue a career within the IDF.¹⁸² If women manage to overcome the pressures from their families and their communities, they still face the challenges of practicing their faith while serving in a secular military and often find themselves adopting certain uniform styles considered offensive and they even work on *Shabbat*.¹⁸³ Israel's exemption of ultra-Orthodox Jews from mandatory military service has recently divided the country and has caused friction between the higher court of Israel and its parliament, which has declared parts of the existing exemption undemocratic and inequitable.¹⁸⁴ Members of the ultra-Orthodox community continue to fight to retain their exception to service because they believe it is

¹⁷⁸ Jewish Rhode Island Staff, “Israel Emissary Discusses Women in IDF,” *Jewish Rhode Island*, March 8, 2020, <https://www.jewishrhody.com/stories/israel-emissary-discusses-women-in-idf,11475>.

¹⁷⁹ Elana Ringler, “Israelis Divided over Military Drafting of Ultra-Orthodox Jews,” Reuters, March 13, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-politics-mood/israelis-divided-over-military-drafting-of-ultra-orthodox-jews-idUSKCN1GP25J>.

¹⁸⁰ Elran and Sheffer, *Military Service in Israel*, 77.

¹⁸¹ Idit Shafran Gittleman, “Female Service in the IDF: The Challenge of an ‘Integrated’ Army,” *Lawfare* (blog), February 28, 2018, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/emale-service-idf-challenge-integrated-army>.

¹⁸² Ruth Eglash, “Why a Growing Number of Religious Women Want to Serve in the Israeli Military,” *Washington Post*, November 10, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/why-a-growing-number-of-religious-women-want-to-serve-in-the-israeli-military/2017/11/09/81584046-bdee-11e7-9294-705f80164f6e_story.html.

¹⁸³ Eglash.

¹⁸⁴ Ringler, “Israelis Divided over Military Drafting of Ultra-Orthodox Jews.”

vital to study the Torah for the survival of the Jewish people, and if they enlist, they would stray from this religious path. The remaining Jewish sects feel the exemption is unfair and does not fulfill the burden of a people's army.

In 2002, the Israeli Army nevertheless did try to regulate and establish a better working environment for the joint service of women and the Orthodox male soldier, but in the end, this attempt failed. Under a regulation titled, "The Proper Integration Ordinance," a set of rules established gender segregated sleeping quarters and exempted male soldiers of this community from certain responsibilities that would require working alongside women.¹⁸⁵ Only, these set of rules discriminated against women and restricted females from applying and screening for certain combat positions and units that accommodated Orthodox men. Furthermore, women who had previously screened for these roles and were accepted into various positions were transferred immediately from these units as soon as a religious male soldier was placed in it, with some demoted, and re-assigned to inferior or less fulfilling jobs.¹⁸⁶ The IDF suspended these rules and instated new policies, which ordered men of the Haredi sect to voice their concerns if they did not wish to serve alongside a woman before being placed in a mixed-gender unit.¹⁸⁷ However, these new guidelines have recently stirred up complaints, as feminist groups throughout Israel have claimed that the new ordinance still continued to promote biased and non-egalitarian conditions. The likelihood that resistance will continue between those who practice Haredim and other sects within Israeli society is high regarding women in combat and their place on the battlefield. The difference of opinion has been a struggle since 1994, when the Israeli government approved women in light combat units. In other words, according to the Haredim sect, the presence of a woman in the IDF is a burden and an obstacle to the fulfillment of national interests.¹⁸⁸ If it were up to this devout group of Jews, women would be banned from service all together.

¹⁸⁵ Gittleman, "Female Service in the IDF."

¹⁸⁶ Gittleman, "Women's Service in the IDF."

¹⁸⁷ Gittleman.

¹⁸⁸ Elran and Sheffer, *Military Service in Israel*, 78.

A successful milestone came in the early 1990s, when the Israeli Supreme Court of Justice ruled that females were not only entitled to both formal and substantive equality within the IDF, but were finally eligible to apply and screen for combat positions; first, as fighter pilots, then as combat soldiers in special components.¹⁸⁹ Most Israeli women who serve in combat do so voluntarily, and are in one of the mixed-gender units or border patrol troops and demonstrate remarkable capabilities. The international community has recognized the success of one such unit called the Caracal Battalion, which has helped maximize Israel's border security. This co-ed infantry unit operates near both Egyptian and Jordanian borders to deter all aggression. Reportedly, these female combatants display excellent self-control and determination, and also exhibit knowledge and professionalism in the use of weapons.¹⁹⁰ Additionally, their male counterparts appreciate and accept them as equals, and their presence contributes to social and unit cohesion. In an article from *The Guardian*, retired Israeli Army Brigadier General Yehudit Grisaro stated, "the majority of soldiers know the rules and recognize the contribution of women. Women are treated in the same way as the men, and they are judged the same as the men. They are paid the same as the men."¹⁹¹ The appreciation toward women in the Israeli military's mixed-gender units fostered solidarity and continues to strengthen the composition of the defense force progressing toward a healthier gender equality within the IDF.

The expansion of integrating women into frontline mobility units continues to be a challenge since Special Forces units, such as Shavetet 13 commando of the IDF—the equivalent to the U.S. Navy SEALs—remains prohibited to women seeking this type of career. Indeed, a growing number of women have shown interest in pursuing membership in these elite units but are currently denied this opportunity since current legislation and views from Orthodox Jews fear women being taken prisoner, and assume the presence of a woman in a Special Forces unit would weaken the team and harm cohesion.¹⁹² In early 2020, four Israeli women accepted into the IDF petitioned the highest court in Israel to

¹⁸⁹ Gittleman, "Female Service in the IDF."

¹⁹⁰ Cawkill et al., *Women in Ground Close Combat Roles*, 27.

¹⁹¹ Hopkins, "The Israeli Defence Forces."

¹⁹² Elran and Sheffer, *Military Service in Israel*, 84.

order the IDF to allow women to screen and apply for all combat units. 18-year-old petitioner Mor Lidani said, “we’re not asking that demands be changed for us—just let us try out and if we qualify, let us join the units.”¹⁹³ A verdict is still pending on this appeal. Consequently, Israeli men and women will continue to be screened differently for combat light positions with the remaining elite billets closed off to women. Even though the traditional Israeli defense structure built up gender barriers, Israeli society has committed to gender equality that has slowly made its way into the IDF.¹⁹⁴ Given that gaps and challenges remain in career progression when comparing the female soldier to her male counterpart within the IDF, 100 percent gender parity cannot be met until all roles become available to women.

In sum, Israel conscripts both genders into its military to promote an egalitarian society better. Currently, 92 percent of the positions within the IDF are available to women. An eight percent gap still exists in specialties that remain off-limits to females.¹⁹⁵ This eight percent career gap is currently the smallest gap amongst all the other countries that have integrated women into their militaries. These specialties may be opened in the future to create a gender-neutral military and enable women to progress successfully in their military careers; however, because of religious constraints and institutional factors, the IDF is restricted in doing so. Even though the ultra-Orthodox community remains wary of the current IDF framework and has a strongly negative opinion toward religious female combatants, the overall national culture supports female integration into combat-related specialties.

C. ANALYSIS

The expansion of an egalitarian Israeli society was driven by societal, institutional, and religious factors, since the birth of the state. These contextual factors created a rare, diverse, and dynamic culture that encompasses a wide range of Jewish characteristics. The

¹⁹³ Yair Altman, “Teens Petition High Court to Order IDF to Open All Combat Units to Women,” sec. News, Israel Hayom, May 20, 2020, <https://www.israelhayom.com/2020/05/20/teens-petition-high-court-to-order-idf-to-open-all-combat-units-to-women/>.

¹⁹⁴ Elran and Sheffer, *Military Service in Israel*, 85–86.

¹⁹⁵ Elran and Sheffer, 80.

sects of Judaism shaped the beliefs and actions of Israelis and determined the structural framework of the IDF, its norms, and ethics, and the representation of both genders within it. Since the state was established, commitment to female equality was expressed through a mandatory draft and institutional policies amended to accommodate the female gender better.¹⁹⁶ The gender-neutral draft and mandatory conscription of all Israeli citizens helped Israel to inculcate a people's army. However, "as for integrating [women] into units and the scope of positions open to them, the needs of the hour along with gender stereotypes regarding 'feminine' roles, dictated the reality on the ground."¹⁹⁷ It took almost 46 years to open light combat positions to Israeli women after their disbandment from these roles in 1948. While traditional norms inherent throughout the Israeli culture still prohibit women on the front lines, as it is considered morally and culturally unfavorable, Israel is among only 22 other countries in the world that allows women to serve in combat battalions. Despite the Israeli culture conveying little hegemonic masculinity in modern-day society and within its IDF, a traditional cultural separation remains between certain Jewish sects. The egalitarian leftist supports females who desire to pursue membership in the IDF and in Special Forces units, while the ultra-Orthodox conservatives disapprove and bar women from these positions. So long as the Israeli government and the more traditional sects of Judaism continue to clash over cultural norms related to gender equality, the IDF will likely struggle to reach full female integration.

All things considered, Israeli women are welcomed in roughly 92 percent of IDF positions, which results in a moderate level of female integration. An eight percent career gap is the smallest gap when compared to other NATO countries that have integrated women into their militaries. However, failure to integrate women completely into all IDF combat positions not only runs counter to the 1951 gender equality bill, but also hinders the military's tactical and operational effectiveness, as women have proven to tackle tasks differently than their male counterparts. The higher courts of Israel direct these types of culture changes, which consider all citizens' petitions and innovated policy changes toward

¹⁹⁶ Gittleman, "Women's Service in the IDF."

¹⁹⁷ Gittleman.

gender equality, and are constantly refining previously mandated IDF instructions. This process proved positive in the early 1990s when the higher courts ruled in favor of women in light combat positions.

A significant shift in cultural norms happened when Israel determined it was unconstitutional to delay women's advancement in light combat units. This ruling went against the decision made many years prior when women were banned from combat service because of religious beliefs. During the War of Independence, women participated in combat roles because they were a part of service long before war began; it was not out of necessity, it was their rightful duty. If positive change to culture occurred when the higher courts of Israel ruled in favor of Alice Miller for her right to apply for an elite pilot's position in 1994, then the likelihood the higher courts of Israel will rule in favor of the petition filed last year regarding women's participation in Special Forces positions is high. Change to traditional religious cultural norms shift culture-sensitive policies and activities that produce equitable outcomes of inclusiveness, which thus allows women to participate in all roles within the IDF. Israel is an inimitable case, as its implementation of women into combat roles began during pre-state Israel-Palestine and continued uninterrupted until the state was established. The higher courts of Israel welcome change for the greater good of its people and strive toward a healthier egalitarian culture.

D. CONCLUSION

For decades, the Israeli strategy has been to build a more egalitarian society, not only militarily but also politically. To achieve a gender parity society, the Israelis utilized a multi-pronged approach. "First, the Israeli military holds an outsized role in the functioning of the state and is embedded within civil society. Second, religion is officially integrated into the state and determines services and legal status. These are the two prominent cultural and institutional barriers to gender equality in Israel and in the region."¹⁹⁸ These two institutional factors contributed largely to the growth of Israel and its progression toward a more democratic society. Due to the cultural disparities driven by

¹⁹⁸ Noa Balf, "A Multi-Pronged Approach to Gender Equality in Israel," Wilson Center, March 8, 2020, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/multi-pronged-approach-gender-equality-israel>.

Israeli institutions and religious considerations administered by the Jewish faith, the inclusion and method of integrating women into combat roles has not only been different but effective when compared to other non-NATO and NATO countries. Israel currently ranks first in gender equality among Northern African and Middle Eastern countries, and 64th in the world. Thus, a culture that encompasses an ideology where all citizens are considered equal, despite resistance from the three branches of Judaism, Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform, has affected the desire and recruitment of more women into the Israeli Defense Army, and has progressed toward a gender-balanced military and society.

Throughout the years, the international community has witnessed Israel's continuous growth in its effective utilization of women in its parliament and national defense strategies; additionally, the Israeli government has worked endlessly to prohibit discriminations and biases toward women filling roles internationally coined masculine. Israeli women involved in government, combat roles, and border security are portrayed as tough, indispensable, and desirable. These women and their contributions are important, a model that should be explored by Latin American countries should they have the desire to implement women into future combat specialties or government positions. Most importantly, the Israelis' strategies in border security encompasses a wide range of women who assist in bringing down terrorist attacks, drug smugglers, and sex traffickers, which is consistent with issues most relevant to Latin America. Latin American countries can possibly utilize women to their advantage in its tactics on keeping a tight secure border as the Israelis do. Analyzing Israel's unique implementation and use of women in combat specialties provides the best direction and measures for implementing women into Latin American militaries, since these regions are most similar regarding regional security, as most conflicts in both these regions are with its geographic neighbors.

IV. THE U.S. EXPERIENCE WITH INTEGRATING WOMEN INTO COMBAT POSITIONS

Throughout American history, societal norms and cultural traditions featuring hegemonic masculinities have delayed female participation in the military. Currently, the U.S. Armed Forces' inequality and social exclusion of women persists, which has resulted in a low level of female integration into combat positions. History has proven, however, that the U.S. Armed Forces have been able to chip away at policies of inequality and exclusion concerning African Americans and homosexuals.¹⁹⁹ Integrating these different demographic groups illustrates that cultural norms, no matter how embedded in a nation's traditions, can change. Yet, women still face obstacles because certain paradigms are harder to shift; many male service members worry that implementing females into primary combat roles will disturb unit dynamics and cohesion. Consequently, males may socially accept women into subordinate combat roles, such as in FETs, while still dismissing women as parts of the units, further delaying female integration into elite Special Forces roles.

The United States serves as a cautionary tale; women in countries with similarly embedded misogyny will likely face the same types of obstacles to service in combat roles. In Latin America, machismo stereotypes of strong and aggressive masculine pride are still

¹⁹⁹ The assumptions made against American women's integration into the armed forces, were the same arguments made toward African Americans and homosexuals. One of the biggest steps forward this country has seen in race relations was during the Vietnam War. Black and white soldiers were no longer segregated and ordered to train and live together accepting humanity in one another and fundamentally recognizing that both races carry the same fears and doubts. Trust and compassion were built among these men and confirmed that change to culture norms can be positive and lead to cohesion. Furthermore, antagonists to the integration of African Americans into service are the same opponents who argued against the integration of gays and lesbians into military service. These arguments were premeditated fears that combat effectiveness and unit cohesion would be affected if openly gay service members were integrated into the military and all-male units. These same fears are associated with women's integration into combat MOSs. It has been 10 years since the repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell (DADT), not only did attitudes adjust once the implementation occurred, no signs show that performance unity or social cohesion were hindered with the integration of homosexuals into the U.S. Armed Forces. Additionally, the Israeli, and Norwegian militaries—all of which have had years of experience with gay personnel serving in their forces—have reported no effect on unit performance, cohesion, or ability to meet recruitment and retention goals. The integration of these different demographic groups was effective and proved that unit cohesion could be built after groups were socially accepted by peers, leaders, and national culture, regardless of sexual orientation and race.

pervasive, which contributes to the barriers that keep Latin American women out of military service and combat roles. Thus, this link between the two Americas' cultural norms is significant because, though the United States presents a failed case of female integration into combat specialties, its commonality of hegemonic masculinity reveals lessons that may provide Latin American countries the tools to overcome biases and discriminations toward women's integration into combat specialties.

A. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

For more than 70 years, the U.S. Armed Forces prohibited women from serving in combat. Yet, throughout history, some women fought covertly alongside their spouses, while others disguised themselves as men to be able to engage in conflict and defend their country. During the Revolutionary War, for instance, Deborah Sampson was a woman who dressed like a man and enlisted in the Fourth Massachusetts Regiment; she fought in hand-to-hand combat to serve her country for almost two years.²⁰⁰ Her time as a soldier ended after a doctor who saw her discovered that she was, in fact, a woman. Sampson received an honorable discharge, but not recognized for her valor on the battlefield until years later. More than 400 women were estimated to have disguised themselves as men to be able to fight during the Civil War, which forced women to adapt to the vast societal changes affecting the nation and acquiring new positions with ease in roles that helped shape the United States. These statistics demonstrate women's desires to serve, not only for their country, but also on the front line.

As of WWII, social norms shifted and civil society progressed throughout the nation and expanded roles to women in the U.S. military forces.²⁰¹ During this time, women were able to serve in all specialties, except for restrictions still associated with sea billets and combat positions. Darlene Iskra and Vincent Patton penned, "women were primarily in jobs that were considered socially acceptable for women, such as office clerks,

²⁰⁰ Bright Katz, "Diary Sheds Light on Deborah Sampson, Who Fought in the Revolutionary War," *Smithsonian Magazine*, July 2, 2019, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/diary-sheds-light-deborah-sampson-who-fought-revolutionary-war-180972547/>.

²⁰¹ Darlene M. Iskra and Vincent W. Patton, *Women in the United States Armed Forces: A Guide to the Issues* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2010), 1, ProQuest, Ebookcentral.

typists, telephone operator and nurses in the military.”²⁰² Nevertheless, trying to integrate women into the armed forces was no easy task. For instance, logistical challenges emerged regarding separate lavatories and sleeping quarters for women, and the lack of privacy for women resulted in an increase in sexual harassment and sexual assault cases.²⁰³ In addition, military leaders struggled to manage women in the same capacity as men and labeled many of their concerns as “problems with women.”²⁰⁴ Even so, these “problems with women” were not associated with women’s work ethics or with a woman’s ability to complete the job successfully.

After WWII concluded, women became a permanent part of the U.S. military through the Armed Forces Integration Act of 1948.²⁰⁵ While this act gave women the opportunity to experience more unique military jobs throughout the 1950s–1960s, such as airplane mechanics and Supply Corps, these jobs would still force women to remain subordinate to men. It was not until conscription ended after the Vietnam War in the 1970s that equal opportunity for women increased and female participation in the military grew. This participation continued well into the 1980s. With limited male manpower to fill specific jobs, women happily enlisted and were recruited to serve their country.²⁰⁶

The practice of banning women from combat roles persisted for the next two decades. Specifically, in 1988, the DOD adopted the “Risk Rule” to standardize the definition of combat missions across all the military departments, which especially

²⁰² Darlene M. Iskra, “Attitudes toward Expanding Roles for Navy Women at Sea: Results of a Content Analysis,” *Armed Forces & Society* 33, no. 2 (January 1, 2007): 203, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X06287883>.

²⁰³ Iskra, 213–214.

²⁰⁴ Iskra and Patton, *Women in the United States Armed Forces*, 1.

²⁰⁵ President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Selective Training and Service Act into law, which established the first peacetime draft in U.S. history. With this new law, drafting women alongside their male counterparts was suggested to Congress. When the war died down, the urgency for women to enlist diminished and the suggestion to draft women died quickly. The idea to incorporate women into selective service resumed again in 1980 when Soviet Union forces invaded Afghanistan. President Jimmy Carter wanted to draft women, but Congress chose not to act upon his request. In 2000, more than 45 million men registered with selective service since it was reorganized in 1980; today, women are still excluded from the draft.

²⁰⁶ Eileen Patten and Kim Parker, *Women in the U.S. Military: Growing Share, Distinctive Profile* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2011), 12.

restricted the assignment of women.²⁰⁷ Kristy Kamarck, an analyst of military power, explained that the Risk Rule even excluded women from noncombat operations if the “risks of exposure to direct combat, hostile fire, or capture were equal to or greater than the risks in the combat units they supported.”²⁰⁸ This rule created a tremendous barrier for women’s participation in the armed forces, not only limiting job growth and recruitment, but also preventing opportunities within combat realms, and barring women from deployment. It was not until 1994 that Congress modified the original 1988 Risk Rule, which ultimately authorized women to fly during combat missions and serve on board combatant ships.²⁰⁹ This reform paved the way toward women’s acceptance into all specialties; however, it had been a 20-year wait before the combat inclusion policy change occurred, which indicated that women would now be able to apply for all fields within the DOD.

The DOD made several important advancements toward women in the military during the late 1990s and early 2000s. The prolonged COIN campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, which saw no distinction between front-line enemy fire and rear echelons, helped to increase women’s support in combat units.²¹⁰ Yet, women’s participation in combat units was not recognized until 2005 when the world saw its first FET, a team that enhanced U.S. military COIN operations in Afghanistan.²¹¹ The United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) created this pilot program of a team of women support enablers. These women trained in tactics and operations and deployed alongside the Green Berets, Navy SEALs, and Army Rangers, and other special operations teams on sensitive missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.²¹² Three years later, two of Senator Barack Obama’s campaign slogans, when running for president in 2008, were “Change We Can

²⁰⁷ Department of Defense, *Report Task Force on Women in the Military* (Washington, DC: Pentagon, 1988), 10, <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a190369.pdf>.

²⁰⁸ Kamarck, *Women in Combat: Issues for Congress*, 8.

²⁰⁹ Martha E. McSally, *Women in Combat: Is the Current Policy Obsolete?* (Fort Belvoir, VA: Defense Technical Information Center, 2007), 17, <https://doi.org/10.21236/ADA515501>.

²¹⁰ Ben Barry, “Women in Combat,” *Survival* 55, no. 2 (May 2013): 20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2013.784461>.

²¹¹ Brigitte Rohwerder, “Lessons from Female Engagement Teams,” GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report, 3, January 14, 2015, www.gsdr.org/go/research-helpdesk.

²¹² Lemmon, *Ashley’s War*, 1.

Believe In,” and “Change We Need.”²¹³ Upon his election to the presidency, one important and historical change that occurred happened when he lifted the long-standing ban against women in combat roles.

In 2013, then Defense Secretary Leon Panetta ordered the DOD to repeal the 1994 combat exclusion policy on women serving on the front lines.²¹⁴ Three years passed between the repeal and implementation, which gave the DOD substantial time to conduct studies, administer training, and determine how best to integrate women into each service. The U.S. Marines requested “an exemption for infantry and armor positions, citing a year-long study that showed integration could hurt its fighting ability.”²¹⁵ However, an all-male infantry with traditional norms dominates this service’s fighting force that still separates its trainees by gender, which leads to biases and discrimination against the opposite sex. After consideration, Defense Secretary Panetta denied the Marine Corps’ request because he believed all services should operate under the same set of standards.²¹⁶

By the end of fiscal year 2015, all combat billets in the U.S. military were open to women. First Lieutenant Shaye Haver and Captain Kristen Griest made history when they successfully passed the Army’s elite Ranger training, which makes them the first two females to complete the U.S. Army’s Ranger School in Fort Benning, GA. These women trained for this experience and mentally prepared themselves to finish the course following the same standards as their 94 male counterparts.²¹⁷ Even with this successful achievement, negative backlash at the unit-level endured, as it was assumed these women only passed because they cheated the standards. Today, roughly 50 women have followed in Haver’s and Griest’s footsteps and successfully passed Army Ranger training.

²¹³ “President Barack Obama: State of the Union Address,” Semantic Scholar, 17, January 27, 2010, https://photos.state.gov/libraries/ukraine/164171/pdf/state_union10.pdf.

²¹⁴ Szayna et al., *Considerations for Integrating Women into Closed Occupations*, ix.

²¹⁵ Matthew Rosenberg and Dave Philipps, “All Combat Roles Now Open to Women, Defense Secretary Says,” *New York Times*, sec. U.S., December 3, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/04/us/politics/combat-military-women-ash-carter.html>.

²¹⁶ Rosenberg and Philipps.

²¹⁷ Scott Newman, “First Female Soldiers Graduate from Army Ranger School,” NPR, accessed September 3, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2015/08/21/433482186/first-female-soldiers-graduate-from-army-ranger-school>.

According to a November 2019 memorandum from Naval Special Warfare (NSW), 625 female Navy Officers and Enlisted Sailors serve in NSW as ground combat support personnel, including two females serving in phases of Sea, Air, Land/Special Warfare Combat Craft (SEAL/SWCC) training.²¹⁸ On July 9, 2020, an unidentified female became a Green Beret, who graduated from the Army's Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC), successfully completed the training as the men did, all while not requiring modified standards.

In sum, traditional masculine norms embedded within American society insisted on retaining females subordinate to males. Consequently, these societal norms helped to establish a patriarchal culture within the U.S. Armed Forces, form biases, and discriminate against women and their capabilities that continue to persist today.

B. LOW LEVEL OF FEMALE INTEGRATION: CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The U.S. military currently struggles to integrate women into combat billets effectively due to the biased opinions that remain among male service members. This hegemonic masculine culture embedded within the DOD currently remains the hardest paradigm to change. The DOD Annual Sexual Assault report for 2019 stated, “male-dominated cultural norms are slowly changing, giving way to more inclusive attitudes. However, the appropriate role for women in the military, occupational differences in women’s acceptance, and cynicism about exceptions to standards based on biological differences remain considerable points of contention.”²¹⁹ In the same report, “women indicated that these challenges vary by unit; therefore, moving to commands with better climates [toward] the acceptance of women allows them to succeed professionally, [which]

²¹⁸ M. K. Hannan, “Department of the Navy, Naval Special Warfare Command, Full Integration of Women in Special Operations Forces, Fiscal Year 2019” (official memorandum, Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, November 26, 2019).

²¹⁹ Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2020), 5, https://media.defense.gov/2020/Apr/30/2002291660/-1/-1/1/1_DEPARTMENT_OF_DEFENSE_FISCAL_YEAR_2019_ANNUAL_REPORT_ON_SEXUAL_ASSAULT_IN_THE_MILITARY.PDF.

improves their performance.”²²⁰ The results of this survey indicated that gender biases and inequalities linger within the U.S. DOD since the inclusion of women into combat specialties. Male service members continue to assume that women’s inclusion will hinder team cohesion; these assumptions and the ungrounded reservations that accompany them continue to go unaddressed, especially within SOF communities.

SOF communities have been unsuccessful with integrating females into their training pipelines largely because the cornerstone of its foundational belief is the trust in its fellow “man.” These communities fear that integrating women into units may expunge a legacy of traditions and culture. This particular statistic surfaced in a Research and Development (RAND) report distributed across SOF commands to male operators, which determined that 74.2 percent of men strongly opposed opening up their specialty to women, but 89.3 percent of men believed that females in combat support positions were positive combat support enablers.²²¹ In response to the survey, one male operator wrote, “No one wants this. DO us a favor and listen to what we are saying for a change. This will destroy SOF units. And it will most definitely create a mass exodus from the community.”²²² In a similar report, of the 1,468 men interviewed about opening up their specialties to women, 910 said they would leave the military if female integration occurred.²²³ This high percentage of unwanted female integration will consequently hinder performance and the soldier’s motivation if women are not recognized as valuable members of a team. “Why are you [women] trying to destroy the last good thing we [men] have left,” a U.S. special forces operator asked author Andrea Goldstein in a 2018 article about the resistance to women in combat.²²⁴ Equally, the former President of the United States ridiculed the Navy SEALs’ desire to change its ethos to gender-neutral when he tweeted that he will “overturn

²²⁰ Department of Defense, 5.

²²¹ Eric V. Larson et al., *Considerations for Integrating Women into Closed Occupations in the U.S. Special Operations Forces*. “Appendices.” (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2015), 72.

²²² Larson et al., 111.

²²³ Alesha Doan et al., *Executive Summary Project Diane: University of Kansas Research Team* (Lawrence, KS: The University of Kansas, n.d.), 50.

²²⁴ Goldstein, “Why Are You Trying to Destroy the Last Good Thing Men Have?,” 387.

this ridiculous order.”²²⁵ This sentiment will hinder the efficiency of female implementation and negatively affect the recruitment of women into SOF. This tasteful change to culture on behalf of NSW was a progressive recruiting technique to attract more women into this field by utilizing gender-neutral terms.

The U.S. military continues to be ineffective with its recruiting efforts toward females and even though these inefficiencies are recognized, measures to improve are lacking. The findings in a 2017-RAND report on *Recruiting Policies and Practices for Women in the Military* found that “female recruits prefer female recruiters and are less concerned about sexual harassment when recruited by a woman soldier. Commanders of the recruiting services report a strong desire to recruit more women through targeted outreach and increased advertising but expressed concern that the resources available to them were insufficient to accomplish such targeted efforts.”²²⁶ One recommendation from the same report suggests ensuring female service members and female recruiters are highly visible at recruiting stations and recruiting events.²²⁷ However, the U.S. Armed Forces do not recruit in this manner, particularly within the Department of the Navy. The Command Navy Recruiting Command (CNRC) controls 91 percent of Navy’s influx from the civilian population, while the remaining nine percent of personnel are recruited internally from the Navy’s fleet.²²⁸ Internal fleet recruiting, from which NSW obtains the majority of its recruits, is funded differently than CNRC. This funding supports an organization known as the ACADMI structured and run by former Navy SEAL male veterans stationed across the United States, with no female representation.²²⁹ For this reason, a recruiting issue persists within the SOF communities with little to zero support for women. Therefore, meeting

²²⁵ Geoff Ziezulewicz, “Trump Tweets that He Will Overturn Recent Changes to the Navy SEAL Ethos,” *Navy Times*, October 1, 2020, <https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2020/10/01/trump-tweets-that-he-will-overturn-recent-changes-to-the-navy-seal-ethos/>.

²²⁶ Douglas Yeung et al., *Recruiting Policies and Practices for Women in the Military: Views from the Field* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2017), 53, <https://doi.org/10.7249/RR1538>.

²²⁷ Yeung et al., xi, 54.

²²⁸ “Navy Recruiting Command,” Department of Defense, November 19, 2020, <https://www.cnrc.navy.mil/>.

²²⁹ “Challenge: ACADMI Recruiting,” Naval Special Warfare, accessed February 1, 2021, <https://www.navywc.com>.

recruiting goals in an all-volunteer force in the burgeoning era of great power competition could prove difficult. As the United States continues to meet demands in the current nature of war, reconsidering selective service to involve women would broaden the U.S. military's operational capabilities. With the lifting of the combat exclusion policy, women are now welcome in every MOS across the armed forces, and according to an article in the *New York Times*, "drafting only men in the military is now unconstitutional."²³⁰ In the same article, Judge Miller of Federal District Court in the Southern District of Texas said, "while historical restrictions on women in the military may have justified past discrimination, American men and women are now similarly situated for purposes of a draft or registration for a draft."²³¹ Equating both sexes across the military spectrum is essential in building a gender-neutral organization. Measures taken to achieve this equality may possibly eliminate challenges that persist with how the U.S. Armed Forces military continues to recruit and train its personnel.

Training programs within the U.S. military are currently impeding the progress toward an egalitarian-armed force. In particular, the men and women of the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) train separately in gender-segregated boot camps, which results in an ineffective way to integrate women into the military. Research has shown that boot-camp segregation can reinforce preexisting gender stereotypes.²³² In *Law and Inequality: A Journal of Theory and Practice*, Carrier Peterson wrote, "women should be integrated with men so that men can see women in positions of leadership, and gain respect for them."²³³ Her findings concluded that, "gender segregated basic training might very well create this type of masculine dynamic, causing more problems with sexual harassment when the sexes are integrated in officer training or training for [combat specialties]."²³⁴ Likewise, a group

²³⁰ Tyler Pager, "Drafting Only Men for the Military Is Unconstitutional, Judge Rules," *New York Times*, sec. U.S., February 24, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/24/us/military-draft-men-unconstitutional.html>.

²³¹ Pager.

²³² "Rethinking Gender Segregation in the Marines," August 22, 2017, Alexander McCoy, TEDxMileHigh, video, 13:10, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syQlqRNYq2M>.

²³³ Carrier Peterson, "Separation Anxiety and Boot Camp: Why Basic Training Should Remain Gender-Integrated," *University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing* 17, no. 1 (1999): 157.

²³⁴ Peterson, 157.

of Marine Corps female veterans reinforced the idea that gender segregation in boot camps created a negative stereotype environment that treated women as outsiders, which ultimately made most females feel weaker and less important.²³⁵ Even with these grievances, segregation still persists today. In a study conducted by William Rose and Melissa McAdam on the integration of female pilots, they concluded, “the presence of men who already know and respect a new female unit member can help to ease the transition of women into formally all-male environments. For example, females completing [combat] training, could be assigned to units along with male peers who graduated with them.”²³⁶ Being socially accepted by colleagues has been shown to work effectively with the integration of females into the aviation community, a training path all communities in each service should emulate. Dr. Simons suggested that, “men and women should be trained together and not thrust downrange. When they train together, they bond more familiarly. They become protective rather than predatory [toward] one another.”²³⁷ Dr. Simons’s testimonial proved accurate during a mixed-gender unit training experiment conducted by the USMC. Men and women performed more effectively when groups and units were trained together from the beginning and bridged comradery and unit level cohesion.

A breakthrough report on the *Implementations of Integrating Women into USMC Infantry*, concluded that cohesion in mixed gender units that train together from the beginning improved over time; however, for cohesion to increase, it required all members of the unit and command headquarters to accept each individual as an equal counterpart to alleviate gender hostile cohesion.²³⁸ Within the USMC’s new direction and Force Design 2030, Commandant General David H. Berger expressed the significance of cohesion and

²³⁵ Jonah Bennett, “Female Marine Vets Complain Boot Camp Segregation ‘Reinforces Negative Stereotypes,’” *The Stream* (blog), November 7, 2016, <https://stream.org/female-marine-vets-complain-boot-camp-segregation-reinforces-negative-stereotypes/>.

²³⁶ William Rosenau and Melissa McAdam, *The Integration of Female Marine Pilots and Naval Flight Officers, 1990–2000* (New York: Writers Publishing Company, Inc., 2014), 31.

²³⁷ “Women in Combat: History and Today’s Debate,” March 30, 2017, The Institute of World Politics, video, 1:11:13, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAvZDVFe0Yw&t=980s>.

²³⁸ Arnaud Planiol, *The Integration of Women in the U.S. Military*, issue 43 (Paris: The Institute for Strategic Research, 2016), 11, https://www.irsem.fr/data/files/irsem/documents/document/file/2443/Etude_IRSEM_n43_En.pdf.

female integration into all combat roles and special forces units, by stating, “we’re going to fight and operate better if we’re a more diverse force...science proves that if you have a more diverse group of people, you are going to reach better decisions, you’re going to operate better. We’re all about combat effectiveness. We have to move in that direction. There are no field off limits right now.”²³⁹ Additionally, the Commandant recently opened up recruitment opportunities from within the Corps to Marine Corps women who were interested in applying and screening for Special Forces, which would increase the number of female candidates and assist with recruiting and retaining women. General Berger has also made plans to end gender segregation boot camps after the Marine Corps’ first ever coed company graduated last year, and who performed, “very well.”²⁴⁰ However, as of the beginning of 2021, this traditional norm goes unchanged. The USMC’s endeavors for cultural change are reflected in Force Design 2030, which targets new norms for the 21st century soldier.

The linkage between manhood and brotherly love continues across the SOF enterprise and those who chose to enlist conform to traditional masculine norms. However, due to recent incidents and high-profile scandals within the SOF community, such as the 2019 re-deployment of SEAL Team Seven platoon, a request for culture and ethics review across the SOF enterprise was recognized. It was determined that “USSOCOM’s cultural focus on SOF employment and mission accomplishment is to the detriment of leadership, discipline and accountability.”²⁴¹ General Richard Clarke, Commander of USSOCOM added, “we need to improve our leader development programs...leaders drive culture, and maintaining a healthy and high performing culture requires present and actively involved

²³⁹ Ryan Evans, “A Chat with the Commandant: Gen. David H. Berger on the Marine Corps’ New Direction,” War on the Rocks, April 6, 2020, <https://warontherocks.com/2020/04/a-chat-with-the-commandant-gen-david-h-berger-on-the-marine-corps-new-direction/>.

²⁴⁰ Gina Harkins, “Here’s the Marine Corps’ Plan to End Gender Segregation at Boot Camp,” Military.com Network, September 1, 2020, <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/09/01/heres-marine-corps-plan-end-gender-segregation-boot-camp.html>.

²⁴¹ United States Special Operations Command, *USSOCOM Comprehensive Review Report* (San Diego, CA: United States Special Operations Command, 2020), 4, <https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn%3Aaaid%3Asc%3AUS%3Ab74eacf5-160d-4dac-afca-ecde4c0ccaaf#pageNum=2>.

leadership.”²⁴² Currently, integrating women into a pre-existing problematic culture is not conducive and unattainable. Strengthening leadership at all levels can shape new norms and assist in altering the systemic cultural issues that persist with, according to *Military Times*, “swashbuckling operators engaging in illicit substance use, sexual misconduct, financial schemes and war crimes, [with] little or no accountability brought down by their chains of command.”²⁴³ On the contrary, Army Special Forces has seen a small but important cultural shift in the contribution of female integration into combat arms. As a model to the other U.S. services, two women successfully passed the elite U.S. Army Rangers training in 2015 with over 50 women following in their footsteps.²⁴⁴ To add, the Army’s integration plan—Soldier 2020—involved a new plan for gender-neutral standard tests and training, with results to post later this year.

Combat operational mental and physical standards and training are “major factors in establishing and maintaining perceptions of competence, which is important for cohesion...[and] maintaining high standards emerged as a critical issue and a top concern for SOF personnel.”²⁴⁵ These standards have been in place for more than two decades, with recent reports and thorough examinations concluding their relevance with today’s preparation of the battlefield and the current warfare. Since the lifting of the combat inclusion policy, selective women have met all the standards for combat readiness in terms of physical capability and mental health. Dr. Kelly and Dr. Jameson conducted an in-depth validation report on the possible biases women would face during the selection and training procedures, to include the physical screening tests and physical evolution exercises during the initial phase of training for Navy SEAL/SWCC training and assessment. Their findings concluded, “all candidates, regardless of sex should be expected to overcome these selection and training demands, as they are reflective of the challenges faced during these

²⁴² United States Special Operations Command, 4.

²⁴³ Meghann Myers, “SOCOM Boss Calls for another Ethics Review,” *Military Times*, August 13, 2019, <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2019/08/12/socom-boss-calls-for-another-ethics-review/>.

²⁴⁴ Newman, “First Female Soldiers Graduate from Army Ranger School.”

²⁴⁵ Szayna et al., *Considerations for Integrating Women into Closed Occupations*, 39.

operations.”²⁴⁶ Furthermore, both programs mirror the difficulties with today’s operational demands, which should not be diminished. The result therefore would be a gender-neutral training environment.²⁴⁷ Both men and women have the competence and abilities to meet SOF standards. Szayna et al. exclaimed, “although there are often large differences between men and women, primary emphasis must be placed on an individual’s capabilities to perform critical tasks and individual risks for developing an injury.”²⁴⁸ To achieve critical tasks in SOF, mental and physical hurdles should be based on an individual’s performance and not stereotyping gender as a whole. The disparities between women and men are not good indicators for understanding SOF mission readiness and operational requirements.

Likewise, despite common knowledge that women and men experience emotional responses differently,²⁴⁹ since Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, men and women in the U.S. military have reportedly developed mental health issues equally after combat, and women were reported significantly less likely than their male counterparts to receive a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).²⁵⁰ According to a study from a scholar at Harvard University—that examined roughly 500 American service members after they experienced combat—said, “interactions between combat-related stressors and gender were unable to predict PTSD, mental health functioning, or

²⁴⁶ Karen Kelly and Jason Jameson, *Navy—SEAL and SWCC Physical Standards Validation Report 2* (Coronado, CA: Naval Special Warfare Command, 2013), 8, <https://authorzilla.com/5YDXb/navy-seal-and-swcc-physical-standards-validation-report2-pdf.html>.

²⁴⁷ Kelly and Jameson, 6.

²⁴⁸ Szayna et al., *Considerations for Integrating Women into Closed Occupations*, x.

²⁴⁹ According to a study titled “Gender Differences in Response to Emotional Stress,” “women and men are at risk for different types of stress-related disorders, with women at greater risk for depression and anxiety and men at greater risk for alcohol-use disorders.” Tara M. Chaplin et al., “Gender Differences in Response to Emotional Stress: An Assessment across Subjective, Behavioral, and Physiological Domains and Relations to Alcohol Craving,” *Alcoholism, Clinical and Experimental Research* 32, no. 7 (July 2008): 1242–50, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1530-0277.2008.00679.x>.

²⁵⁰ Charles W. Hoge, Julie C. Clark, and Carl A. Castro, “Commentary: Women in Combat and the Risk of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Depression,” *International Journal of Epidemiology* 36, no. 2 (April 1, 2007): 327, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dym013>; Louise Liddon, Roger Kingerlee, and John A. Barry, “Gender Differences in Preferences for Psychological Treatment, Coping Strategies, and Triggers to Help-Seeking,” *British Journal of Clinical Psychology* 57, no. 1 (2018): 57, <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjc.12147>.

depression. This indicates that female military members were equally as resilient as males, and suggests that the traditional view of women being more ‘vulnerable’ is incorrect.”²⁵¹

In sum, the concern whether a woman is physically or mentally capable of meeting the set combat standards is no longer an argument since data has proven women’s capabilities. The current debate amongst scholars and U.S. male service members is expressed within this statement made by Dr. Simons, “women in support roles are already a critical asset for intelligence work, reconnaissance and other sensitive missions; therefore, how would women’s presence in a combat unit help them close with and destroy the enemy more effectively?”²⁵² This argument suggests that for some unknown and unstated reason, women’s work on the battlefield would be less effective than their work not on it. A woman’s presence on the battlefield is socially accepted only in subordinate positions to men, and women’s fight toward equal participation and approval from her male peers in primary combat positions is ongoing. In a survey conducted in 2016, one male operator expressed, “Women do not have to attend BUD/S or wear a Trident to be effective in a SOF role or to work with SEALs. ... They do not have to have a Trident to be effective in low visibility operations.”²⁵³ In a study conducted by William Rose and Melissa McAdam on the integration of female pilots, they concluded, “the presence of men who already know and respect a new female unit member can help to ease the transition of women into formally all-male environments. For example, females completing [combat] training, could be assigned to units along with male peers who graduated with them.”²⁵⁴ Being socially accepted by colleagues has been shown to work effectively with the integration of females into the aviation community, a training path all communities in each service should emulate.

²⁵¹ David McCarthy, *Women in Combat a Perspective from Affective Science* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, n.d.), 1–2, accessed August 16, 2020, https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/jenniferlerner/files/mccarthy_david_-_women_in_combat_a_perspective_from_affective_science.pdf.

²⁵² The Institute of World Politics, “Women in Combat: History and Today’s Debate.”

²⁵³ Larson et al., *Considerations for Integrating Women into Closed Occupations in the U.S. Special Operations Forces. “Appendices,”* 111.

²⁵⁴ Rosenau and McAdam, *The Integration of Female Marine Pilots*, 31.

C. ANALYSIS

It has been five years since the rescinding of the combat exclusion policy in the United States, which precluded women from assigned combat units fighting on the front lines and limited women's opportunity to hold the highest ranks in the U.S. military.²⁵⁵ Yet, the powerhouse of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, under the direction of the President of the United States, has yet to have a woman join their ranks. Traditionally, as Darlene Iskra and Vincent Patton said, "the male warrior model has defined the military [and] the 'cult of masculinity' inherent in the military defines the warrior as a man of power...and those who do not fit into this ideal are considered inferior and without value."²⁵⁶ It is true that the predominant gender fighting in a combat zone throughout the United States' history has overwhelmingly been male and will remain this way until women are socially accepted into the brotherhood of men as warriors.

The hegemonic masculine culture embedded within the U.S. Armed Forces institution has heavily painted women as the weaker gender. Military leaders have argued the need for women fighting on the front lines, women's physical stature, and their mental abilities of handling combat stressors, since women's inclusion into military service. The concern on whether a woman is physically or mentally capable of meeting the set standards, however, is no longer an argument. The Special Forces standards do limit the pool of women more so than in any other military combat occupation specialty across the armed forces spectrum; nevertheless, women are passing the set standards and are doing so competitively. The remaining obstacles with women's inclusion into combat billets center on the preconceived notions that an imbalance in unit cohesion will occur if females are integrated into primary combat billets. Rather than change the systemic issues from within the institution, women were integrated into enabling and supporting roles and had to earn the respect of their male counterparts without hindering unit cohesion.

Unit cohesion is essential for mission effectiveness. To be an effective team, social acceptance from peers is key in building trust and comradery as one solid unit, regardless

²⁵⁵ Daniel, "Panel Says Rescind Policy on Women in Combat."

²⁵⁶ Iskra and Patton, *Women in the United States Armed Forces*, 1.

of sexual orientation, race, or gender. The data presented showed that sexual orientation and race had no effect on unit cohesion and loss of solidarity did not occur when different demographics were integrated into the military. When mixed-gender units were evaluated, unit cohesion improved over time as gender teams began to work effectively when women were socially included and accepted by their male peers. The data also suggested that gender-segregated training created biases and discriminations, and could possibly lead to more sexual assault cases in the future. Furthermore, Agnes Schaefer et al. reported that gender-integrated training improves women's performances in physical fitness, marksmanship, and individual proficiency test scores that can enhance team cohesion.²⁵⁷ Women have proven themselves physically and mentally over the years and are not only capable of meeting the same requirements as their male counterparts, they bring a different dynamic to the team's effectiveness. However, higher percentages of male units shy away from this statistic and would rather see these women who are outperforming their male counterparts in supporting enabling roles.

The combat exclusion policy was lifted five years ago, and yet the institutionalized alpha male mentality still remains. How will females fit in if they are not wanted? It is essential that military leadership and popular public opinion stand by the Obama Administration's original decision regarding female integration into combat positions and show support, especially male service members at the unit level. This stance will show the international communities, particularly Latin American countries, that the United States of America maintains a healthy, gender-neutral cohesive fighting force.

D. CONCLUSION

The United States took seven decades to integrate women fully into the armed forces. The integration phases—to name a few—began during World War II, when women just began to be assimilated into medical roles, then progressed to the Vietnam era when manpower shortages occurred, and continued until the rescinding of the long-standing ban against women in combat, which took place in 2015. During each of these phases, women's

²⁵⁷ Agnes Schaefer et al., *An Assessment of Options for Increasing Gender Integration in Air Force Basic Military Training* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2018), 8, <https://doi.org/10.7249/RR1795>.

integration into the U.S. Armed Forces was debated, with deliberations still continuing today about needing women in direct fire and on the front lines. The supporters want women in all available units because women are man's equal, while the opponents claim war is a man's affair.²⁵⁸ The U.S. Armed Forces' issues in equality persist, which has resulted in a low level of female integration into combat positions.

Since the time between the rescinding of the combat exclusion policy to present day, roughly 50 women have successfully been integrated into elite Special Forces. The data presented in this case suggested that the integration of African American and homosexuals into the U.S. military was a positive change to culture, yet cultural norms have not exposed paradigm shifts from the inclusion of women into combat roles because the scope of women in primary Special Forces' roles is negligible. The troubling cultural patterns and preconceived notions that differing levels of cohesion imbalance will occur with the integration of women into combat units continue among the patriarchal male service member within the U.S. Armed Forces institution. However, the hegemonic masculine cultural and institutional obstacles have made women more resilient in their fight toward equal opportunity within the military, which addresses the factors that perpetuate the gender gaps of inequality in the civilian sector.

Due to the various routes and timelines each service took with incorporating females into combat positions within the U.S. Armed Forces, this case study has both positive and negative outcomes, along with lessons learned from the challenges. The failures provide valuable key lessons that Latin American countries can review for future implementation. From these failed perspectives, this case study is relevant to policymakers in Latin America and beyond this region, in that, it provides an analysis of challenges and prospects for the successful integration of women into combat-related specialties, should the region open to gender diversity in these types of billets. While gender gaps remain in certain areas of Latin America, countries, such as Nicaragua, take gender equality seriously and can pioneer the way with female integration.²⁵⁹ Brazil has allowed females to fill

²⁵⁸ Planiol, *The Integration of Women in the U.S. Military*, 11.

²⁵⁹ Schwab et al., *Global Gender Gap Report 2020 Insight Report*, 5.

combat-related billets, which is currently paving the way for social change in a machismo culture engrossed into Brazilian society. However, in Brazil, for these females to succeed in combat MOSs, their male Brazilian peers must accept them socially and be supported by their leadership. Latin American countries can learn to adapt and conform to these changes to truly benefit from diversity and create a fighting force that meets modern day conflicts.

V. CONCLUSION

Four years ago, the heads of state and government officials from every NATO country met in Poland to reaffirm the strategic importance of the alliance, justify the body's collective values, and codify its future security vision.²⁶⁰ An all-encompassing agreement reached at the end of the summit detailed the need for women's empowerment and the significance of women to both global security and the longevity of the NATO alliance.²⁶¹ Yet, the implementation of UNSCR 1325,²⁶² and guaranteeing more female representation in NATO militaries, has fallen far short of its goals. These shortfalls of gender gaps in equality in NATO militaries is also seen specifically throughout the Latin American region and was recognized as a pertinent peace and security issue by Latin American female military leaders. Brazilian Navy Lieutenant Commander Marcia Braga said, "we are not there yet, but the trend is to normalize the presence of female officers in front-line roles."²⁶³ Despite Commander Braga's optimism, whether because of traditional masculine norms, paternalism, or other chauvinisms, women still face skepticism in the Latin American militaries.²⁶⁴ The purpose of this thesis was to provide Latin American militaries measures of challenges and prospects for the successful integration of women into combat positions, should the Latin American region be open to gender diversity and closing gaps in gender equality within its militaries.

In Latin America, machismo stereotypes of strong and aggressive masculine pride are pervasive and heavily reinforce the barriers that keep women out of combat roles. Latin American states have the ability to force cultural change that potentially closes gender gaps and empower the region's governments to improve the condition of women by starting with gender equality in its militaries. Latin American women's physical security, economic

²⁶⁰ NATO Heads of State and Government, "Warsaw Summit Communiqué—Issued by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw, 8–9 July 2016, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm.

²⁶¹ NATO Heads of State and Government.

²⁶² UNSCR 1325 is a resolution delineating women's importance in peacekeeping and security.

²⁶³ Tornaghi, "Why It's Essential to Have More Women in Latin American's Militaries."

²⁶⁴ Tornaghi.

prosperity, and peacekeeping longevity could improve by expanding combat roles to females. Through the exploration of three case studies—Norway, Israel, and the United States—this thesis finds that both Norway’s and Israel’s methods were effective for implementing strategies to increase female representation in society and at integrating women into combat functions, while the United States’ case study demonstrates functional cultural deficiencies that hindered integrating women into combat roles. The women of Latin America face political, social, and economic barriers, as well as similar cultural barriers to the United States, which indicates that the future integration of women into combat roles in Latin America may prove difficult. Nevertheless, if Latin American countries emulate the Norwegian egalitarian integration framework and implement gender-mainstreaming concepts throughout the region’s society, a potential cultural shift may close gender gaps in equality within Latin American militaries.

Most Latin American states began democratizing four decades ago to allow women to participate in governmental positions and enlist in the armed forces. Unfortunately, the integration of women into most Latin American militaries has not been a linear process.²⁶⁵ Pronounced gender inequalities and machismo stereotypes are still ubiquitous and contribute to the barriers that keep Latin American women out of military service and combat roles. However, three years ago, Brazil became the first country in Latin America to allow women to apply and screen for combat positions. This decision promotes gender equality within its military and throughout society, which can help fight organized crime, drug trafficking, and sex trafficking, all of which are affected by local women’s situations. Moreover, women who join the Brazilian military do so for upward mobility and professional stability, which improves the overall gender equality gap in economic participation and employment opportunity. Women’s access to paid opportunities in occupational military fields that progress toward leadership roles reduces corruption and poverty levels and is essential for the region’s growth.²⁶⁶ The current economic divide for gender equality in Latin America is roughly 1.1 trillion dollars, and since large gender gaps

²⁶⁵ Donadio et al., *Women in the Armed and Police Forces*, 50.

²⁶⁶ Our Secure Future, “Just the Facts,” 8.

correlate to lower economic growth, closing the gender gaps in equality could potentially end the greatest recession in modern history.²⁶⁷ Moreover, Telley explains that “in stability operations, we have learned that women are an economic multiplier; they are safer borrowers and are more likely to invest earnings in their communities.”²⁶⁸ Thus, to achieve economic parity and gender equality, it is essential that Latin American militaries integrate women fully into combat positions.

This thesis measured four specific metrics—leadership, evolution, cultural norms, and unit-level acceptance—in each of the three case studies. Leadership was identified as key female and male stakeholders in high-ranking positions within the military and the civilian sector that supported this integration. Evolution was the rate of change to the number of females in combat units. Cultural norms exposed paradigm shifts, and unit-level acceptance showed changes in male service members’ attitudes toward females integrated into their units. A high level of integration is present when all three independent variables—leadership support, evolution, and unit-level acceptance—were measured and a cultural shift toward an egalitarian (gender-neutral) military formed. These four factors are individually necessary and jointly sufficient to integrate women into military combat specialties effectively and successfully. Using data from the three case studies, it was determined that Norway, Israel, and the United States had a high, moderate, and low level, respectively, of female integration into combat positions.

A. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Distinctive cultural differences that vary between Norway, Israel, and the United States have either effectively assisted or impeded the advancement of women’s employment into combat specialties. Globally, the case studies in this thesis are recognized as having egalitarian cultures; however, not all cultures have gender-neutral militaries. The deciding factors on women’s integration into combat billets were the hidden and visible variables that make up societal and institutional culture. Some of these hidden and visible variables include an institution’s moral and ethical values, social etiquette, beliefs, or

²⁶⁷ *Americas Quarterly*, “NEW AQ.”

²⁶⁸ Telley, “Women Peace and Security.”

traditions.²⁶⁹ Additionally, institutional cultural behaviors passed from one generation to the next through observation, imitation, and practice through repetition.²⁷⁰ This thesis measured both hidden and visible independent cultural variables that determined the metrics for successfully integrating women into combat specialties. For example, if the values or belief system in the country was more receptive toward women in combat, then it was likely that leadership or unit-level acceptance would shape the tangible cultural differences toward a gender-neutral military.

Dutch academic Geert Hofstede, known for his research on organizational cultures, determined that Norway has a high gender egalitarian culture, since “male social and emotional roles are similar to female roles. Both men and women are modest, cooperative, tender and concerned with quality of life.”²⁷¹ In the United States, however, a low gender egalitarian culture was visible because, “male social and emotional roles are different from females.”²⁷² Hofstede considers American men “assertive, tough, competitive and focused on material success.”²⁷³ These men are unreceptive to females in these particular types of career roles. “Low gender egalitarianism societies have few women in positions of authority, a lower percentage of women in the labour force, and occupational sex segregation.”²⁷⁴ To increase women’s participation in Latin American militaries and effectively implement women into combat roles, Latin American countries should refer to Norway’s gender mainstreaming integration techniques to progress toward a high gender egalitarian military culture.

Figure 1 represents Erin Meyer’s cultural mapping tool that decodes societal differences in Norway, Israel, and the United States. This mapping tool is valuable for this

²⁶⁹ Felicity Menzies, “Nine Cultural Value Differences You Need to Know,” Culture Plus Consulting, June 23, 2015, <https://cultureplusconsulting.com/2015/06/23/nine-cultural-value-differences-you-need-to-know/>.

²⁷⁰ Geert Hofstede, *Culture’s Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations across Nations* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2001), ch. 1.

²⁷¹ Menzies, “Nine Cultural Value Differences You Need to Know.”

²⁷² Menzies.

²⁷³ Menzies.

²⁷⁴ Menzies.

thesis since the first five distinctive cultural facets: communicating, evaluating, leading, deciding, and trusting, show the variations between these states, and if the cultural facet either effectively helped or impeded the advancement of women’s employment into combat specialties. For example, the high egalitarian leading facet—depicted in orange—is a reason why female integration succeeded in Norway. By comparing Figure 1 to Figure 2, the Southern Cone countries can utilize this tool toward modifying their cultural metrics to resemble that of the Norwegian model, should they desire a more egalitarian leading state with consensual decision-making processes.²⁷⁵

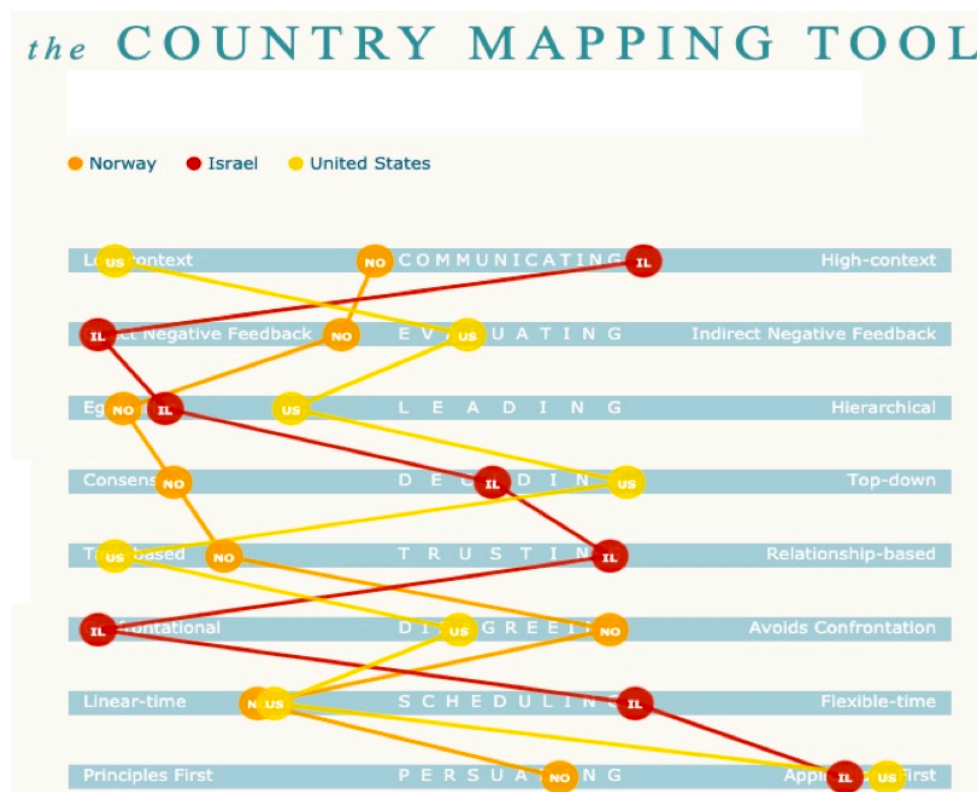


Figure 1. Cultural Differences among Norway, Israel, and the United States.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁵ Erin Meyer, *The Culture Map: Breaking through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2014), ch. 4, ProQuest, Ebookcentral.

²⁷⁶ Adapted from “The Country Mapping Tool,” Erin Meyer, accessed March 3, 2021, <https://erinmeyer.com/tools/culture-map-premium/>; Meyer, *The Culture Map*, ch. 4.

the COUNTRY MAPPING TOOL

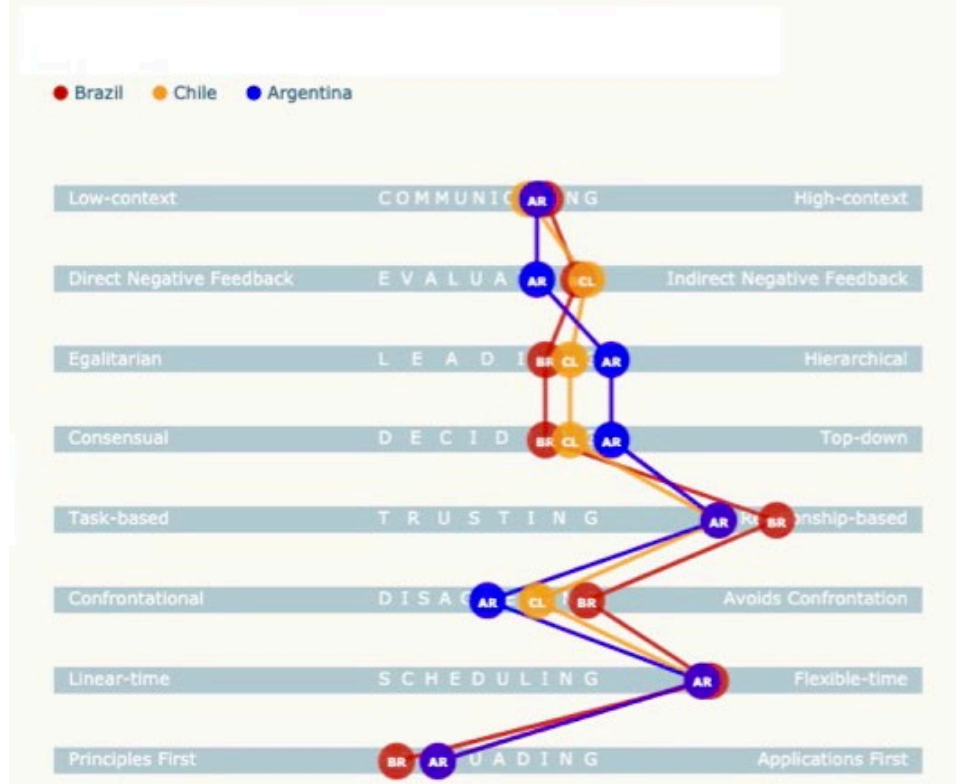


Figure 2. Cultural Differences among Brazil, Chile, and Argentina.²⁷⁷

1. Norway

Norway successfully integrated females into combat roles. The strong role of the Norwegian government positively affected the advancement of females in society and in the armed forces. Norwegian leadership implemented gender-mainstreaming concepts that challenged traditional gender roles that established a high gender egalitarian culture. This strategy reflected the importance of having women share 40 percent of government seats and high-ranking positions within the Norwegian Armed Forces. These gender-neutral concepts allowed women to operate freely in society, concepts that eventually shifted male attitudes in the armed forces to recognize that women's abilities, intelligence, and skills

²⁷⁷ Adapted from Meyer, "The Country Mapping Tool"; Meyer, *The Culture Map*, ch. 4.

mattered more than their gender.²⁷⁸ The consensual decision-making policies in Norway are slow and take time for adaptation; however, by the time a policy is made, a deep sense of commitment occurs throughout society. Consensual decision-making and gender-neutral policies created a nation that was not only culture-aware, but it also eliminated culture-sensitive policies and activities that produced unbiased outcomes of inclusiveness. This process created a seamless evolution of female integration into combat positions.

The Norwegian Parliament made selective service mandatory for women, which effectively expanded equal opportunity through domestic policy. If Norway's desire was to become a more gender-neutral country, it was only fair to draft women alongside their male peers. Moreover, a co-ed mixed gender infantry unit was created to promote gender equality, in which both genders carried out the same duties, experienced the same living arrangements, and met the same physical standards.²⁷⁹ Through the effective drive of female leadership and their gender-mainstreaming concepts, a consensual decision was made to create an all-female Special Forces unit called Jegertruppen, which was established in 2014 and received international recognition. Valuing Norwegian women as citizens enhanced women's opportunities and created a high level of female integration into combat specialties.

2. Israel

Israel moderately succeeded with its integration of females into combat positions. This high gender egalitarian culture is unique since "Israel is the only country in the world where the size of the immigrant groups are so large that they influence the dominant values to the extent that new citizens of Israel change the existing values."²⁸⁰ Through a multi-pronged approach, the different sects of Judaism and the vast responsibility of the IDF played a vital role in women's employment within the military and positively advanced

²⁷⁸ Stratigaki, "Gender Mainstreaming vs Positive Action," 177.

²⁷⁹ Braw, "Norway's Radical Military Experiment."

²⁸⁰ "Hofstede's Insights: Consulting, Training, Certification, Tooling. Israel," Hofstede Insights, 2021, <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country/israel/>.

female's participation into combat positions.²⁸¹ Additionally, Israel is among only a few other countries that conscripts women into its military under a mandatory draft law. Drafting women into light combat battalions, border security, and co-ed infantry units portrays women as tough, indispensable, and desirable in specialties some countries still label masculine. However, for a culture that values individuality, empowers its subordinates, and has the utmost respect for all citizens, it is thought provoking that women are still prohibited from elite Special Forces billets. Since major cultural factors and religious chasms divide the Jewish population within the borders of Israel, the two flavors of Israeli nationalism—the egalitarian leftists versus the ultra-Orthodox conservatives—will forever differ over compromising on female integration into combat roles.²⁸² This cultural disparity resulted in Israel's moderate-level of female integration into combat billets.

The Israeli government has considered the mandatory conscription of members of the Haredi community (ultra-Orthodox), which raises multiple concerns and challenges that can potentially conflict with IDF missions.²⁸³ Since the Haredi community forbids men and women from communicating in social settings, ultra-Orthodox men must be separated from women.²⁸⁴ Ultra-Orthodox communities believe that societal values will never trump the Torah, and lines will never be crossed no matter how unjust they may seem to modern sensibilities.²⁸⁵ Prohibiting Israeli women from Special Forces billets and conscripting ultra-Orthodox Jews into military service remain the two areas of concern. Nevertheless, it can be concluded that a culture that encompasses an ideology where all citizens are considered equal, despite some pockets of resistance from the different sects of Judaism, has affected the desire and recruitment of women into the Israeli Defense Army, and has created a moderate gender-balanced military.

²⁸¹ Balf, "A Multi-Pronged Approach to Gender Equality in Israel."

²⁸² Masci and Jo Starr, "In Israel, Jews Are United by Homeland but Divided into Very Different Groups."

²⁸³ Ringler, "Israelis Divided over Military Drafting of Ultra-Orthodox Jews."

²⁸⁴ Elran and Sheffer, *Military Service in Israel*.

²⁸⁵ Maryles, "Orthodox Judaism."

3. The United States

The United States has been unsuccessful with the integration of females into combat roles. Although Hofstede identifies the United States as an egalitarian society, gender inequalities remain within the armed forces institution. The United States leads from a hierarchal, top-down decision-making approach, where policies are made very quickly and changed frequently with regards to gender-neutrality. The lack of government and institutional involvement in promoting equality, coupled with residual traditional masculine gender norms, and biased opinions about the female gender, resulted in the hasty and extempore integration of females into combat positions. Since the most prevalent theme within the U.S. Armed Forces is the exclusionary, male-dominated culture and hegemonic masculinity even at the highest ranks in the military, the level of female integration into combat MOSs was low. Despite that combat-centric commands are the epitome of this culture, the top-ranking officers making the administrative decisions to allow women into these roles are the primary perpetrators of this mentality and are the reasons why women have not progressed at a faster rate into these specialties. Rather than fix the systemic issue from within the institution, individual female success was achieved by conforming to the pre-existing cultural tendencies that have existed since the establishment of the armed forces. In this theoretical framework, only the exceptional women can prosper, and most women and men not at the top of the hierarchy of hegemonic masculinity are left behind.²⁸⁶

SOF communities have been unsuccessful in integrating females into their training pipelines largely because the cornerstone of their foundational belief is the trust in their fellow “man.” These communities fear that integrating women may expunge a legacy of traditions and culture. In a survey conducted across the SOF enterprise, 74.2 percent of men strongly opposed opening up their specialty to women, but 89.3 percent of men believed that females in subordinate combat positions were positive support enablers to the units.²⁸⁷ Remaining obstacles are centered on the preconceived notions that an imbalance

²⁸⁶ Carter, “Should Women Be Soldiers or Pacifists?”

²⁸⁷ Larson et al., *Considerations for Integrating Women into Closed*, 72.

in unit cohesion will occur if females are integrated into primary combat billets. Indeed, social acceptance and unit cohesion continue to be the ultimate challenge with integrating women effectively, particularly across the SOF enterprise. The driver and enabler of culture change within the U.S. military are targeted, as are affirmative military leadership action and governmental legislation toward gender-equality, which fosters culture diversity. It is through a top-down approach that culture-aware, culture-sensitive policies and activities produce equitable outcomes of inclusiveness to create change at the bottom of most military ranks.

Table 1 highlights the findings from the three cases of Norway, Israel, and the United States.

Table 1. Summary of Findings: Norway, Israel and the United States.²⁸⁸

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	NORWAY	ISRAEL	THE UNITED STATES
GOVERNMENT	Parliamentary Constitutional Monarchy: High gender egalitarian and equal opportunity government involvement	Parliamentary Democracy: Moderate gender egalitarian and equal opportunity government involvement	Constitutional Federal Republic: Low gender egalitarian and equal opportunity government involvement
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS STATUS	Permissive environment: High level of female integration	Semi-permissive environment: Moderate level of female integration	Non-permissive environment: Low level of female integration
MILITARY CONCEPTS AND EMPHASIS	Focused on gender mainstreaming concepts to create and egalitarian environment with an emphasis on conscripting soldiers for peacekeeping missions	Multi-pronged approach: sects of Judaism, and an egalitarian IDF with an emphasis on conscripting a “People’s Army” for regional and border security	An all-volunteer conventional and nuclear armed forces with an emphasis on deterring global terrorism and when applicable, winning major wars
COMBAT INCLUSION YEAR	1985	1995	2015
GLOBAL GENDER GAP RANKING FOR 2020	2nd	64th	53rd

²⁸⁸ Gender Gap Ranking for 2020 Global Educational Attainment and Global Political Empowerment adapted from Schwab et al., *Global Gender Gap Report 2020 Insight Report*, 9, 12–13.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	NORWAY	ISRAEL	THE UNITED STATES
GLOBAL EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	31st	1st	34th
GLOBAL POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT	2nd	64th	86th
SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE OF FEMALES WITHIN MILITARY	High	High	Low
KEY FINDINGS	High value placed on women in the civilian sector. Affirmative legislative and institutional female leadership drive change and create opportunities for equality which endorsed a sufficient integration of females into combat specialties	A culture that encompasses an ideology where all citizens are considered equal; despite some resistance from different sects of Judaism and government involvement, a moderate gender-neutral military was formed with adequate female representation in combat roles	The lack of legislative and institutional leadership involvement in promoting equality, coupled by structural and cultural deficiencies, resulted in an extempore and inadequate integration of females into combat positions

B. LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In all three case studies, a lack of sufficient data on women in service (in general, as well in combat roles), impeded the analysis portion of this thesis. Data related to combat-centric careers was restricted due to the nature of the work, which created challenges for this research. Thus, the number of women in Special Forces billets in both Norway and the United States had to be estimated since this number is not public knowledge. The United States does not keep up-to-date, publicly available records on the number of females in clandestine roles. Additionally, surveys conducted on male service members across the SOF enterprise were outdated. For that reason, this research relies only on the records from 2013–2018, which is the most recent data publicly available.

Based on the results of this study, future research should conduct surveys to determine if attitudes among male service members across the SOF enterprise have changed since the integration of women into special elite billets in both Norway and the United States. Up-to-date surveys will determine if SOF communities need further

cohesion and cultural diversity training. While a substantial amount of research is available on the impact of women's roles in government and female military leaders, research pertaining to the impact on women and team unity after women have integrated into SOF is extremely sparse.

Additionally, an opportunity exists for a future student to expand on this thesis by comparatively analyzing the Norwegian case to a country in Latin America to determine if that country may effectively implement similar gender-mainstreaming strategies. A deeper dive into one of the countries in the Southern Cone, the militaries of which are more gender-neutral than are others in Latin America, can be a good place to begin. Although residual cultural deficiencies linger throughout the Latin American region, a powerhouse of female representation is established at the government level, with women holding one-third of all seats in national legislatures within Latin America as a whole.²⁸⁹ Emulating the Norwegian model would require confirmatory Latin American female legislative leadership to drive change and create opportunities for equality, promote gender-mainstreaming concepts, and endorse women's roles in militaries. Latin American states would have the ability to force cultural change that potentially closes gender gaps and empowers the region's governments to improve the conditions of women wishing to serve in combat specialties.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

Drafting both men and women is a successful way to build an egalitarian organization. The first prime minister of Israel's aspiration was a people's army with one clear vision, equality for all Israeli citizens through mandatory conscription. This effective implementation of a compulsory recruitment system for both men and women created a societal belief that protecting and defending the country of Israel was a right and a duty performed by all. Likewise, in 2015, the Norwegian Parliament made selective service mandatory for women, which effectively expanded equal opportunity through domestic policy. Conscribing women into elite Special Forces billets was a unique strategy Norway

²⁸⁹ *Americas Quarterly*, "NEW AQ."

implemented to retain and recruit more women and advertise women's worth to the international community. Universal conscription expanded the talent pool of Norwegian females, which attracted more women into combat artillery, combat tank, and Norway's all-female special elite team. Norway was ranked the second most gender-equal country in the world because of its liberal approaches to co-ed living, 50/50 mixed gender units, and Special Forces initiatives.²⁹⁰ However, the United States and Latin American countries currently do not draft women into its militaries. Reconsidering selective service to involve women would profitably enhance operational effectiveness and broaden the talent pool of service women. With the lifting of the combat exclusion policy, American women are now welcome in every MOS across the armed forces; it is only fair to include women into mandatory selective service, which is a successful way to progress toward an egalitarian-armed force. Both the U.S. Armed Forces and Latin American states are encouraged to expand the draft to women.

Terminology and language are important factors that influence integration, recruitment, and retention of military personnel. Gender-neutral terminology has been embedded in Norwegian and Israeli society for decades, and is utilized effectively for the conscription of military personnel, which has created a gender-equal environment. The U.S. DOD continues to apply masculine terminology that stands by the band of brothers' myth to placate public opinion and cultural backlash, which has impacted the opinion of women who disagree with utilizing historical masculine philosophy. The long-standing fixation pertaining to the band of brothers' myth has been woven into the fiber of U.S. military culture since its inception.²⁹¹ MacKenzie's argument pertaining to "the current Marine Corps slogan, "The Few. The Proud.," draws directly from King Henry the V's speech, "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers,"²⁹² which is powerful and deeply ingrained within the U.S. military and in the national identity. Further, the current Navy SEALs/SWCC ethos expresses terms of brotherhood and man. However, these ethos and slogans were written long before women were serving within these types of military

²⁹⁰ Schwab et al., *Global Gender Gap Report 2020 Insight Report*, 6.

²⁹¹ MacKenzie, *Beyond the Band of Brothers*, i, iii.

²⁹² MacKenzie, 14.

occupations and thus SOF communities did not need gender-neutral terminology. Though NSW aspires to change its ethos to gender-neutral (favorably endorsed by unit majority commanders and command master chiefs at a leadership level), it was disputed at the lower unit-level.²⁹³ From the unit tier, enlisted members and other veteran SEALs were not in agreement with this change of order, and were concerned this change would be considered another social experiment. Revamping 250-year-old traditions to reflect gender-neutral terminology is superfluous and may upset those members who already belong to these institutions, which unavoidably hinders unit cohesion. However, if U.S. SOF communities are serious about female implementation into Special Forces billets, a progressive update to SOF culture and policy is required. The band of brothers' mentality and traditional cultural norms will inevitably need to evolve so U.S. SOF can progress into a 21st century fighting force that includes women. Moreover, altering historical masculine pronouns, terminology, and ethos could improve women's recruitment and retain more females whose opinions reflect otherwise.

Finally, combat operational physical standards and training are major factors that bridge comradery, establish and maintain perceptions of competence, and determine how effective a team will perform in a combat war zone.²⁹⁴ Combat standards have been in place for more than six decades, with recent reports and thorough examinations concluding their relevance with today's preparation on the battlefield, operational demands, and current nature of warfare. When modern threats change, so do the standards and training design. Therefore, if the men must meet a set standard, the women screening must meet the exact set combat standard as the men. "With equal opportunity, comes equal responsibility." Therefore, lowering any service's set standards to accommodate the female gender not only jeopardizes mission readiness, it paints that individual demographic group

²⁹³ Paul Szoldra, "Navy Updates SEAL Ethos with Gender-neutral Language," Task and Purpose, September 29, 2020, <https://taskandpurpose.com/news/navy-seal-ethos-gender-neutral>.

²⁹⁴ Szayna et al., *Considerations for Integrating Women into Closed Occupations*, 39.

as the weaker sex.²⁹⁵ Continuous regression toward a gender-based fitness screener with reduced minimum scores hurts both sexes, and creates biases toward the opposite gender. Additionally, sex-segregated boot camps build favoritism and lead to discrimination, which reduces cohesion as one solid unit. To achieve critical tasks and missions, a combat unit should train and operate together under one set of gender-neutral standards to eliminate all existing gender-based fitness tests. Training and physical hurdles should be based on an individual's performance and not stereotype gender as a whole. The disparities between women and men are not good indicators for understanding combat mission readiness and operational requirements.

D. CONCLUSION

This thesis measured cultural variables that determined the metrics for success with integrating women into combat specialties and offers lessons for both Latin America and the United States. In this context, progressive change is feasible through assenting governmental and institutional leadership that create new philosophical ideas, values, and beliefs that can shape tangible traditional differences. Culture is a collective enterprise and is not an insurmountable obstacle since progress is possible through policy growth and unified evolution.

²⁹⁵ Kristen M. Griest, "With Equal Opportunity Comes Equal Responsibility: Lowering Fitness Standards to Accommodate Women Will Hurt the Army—and Women," Modern War Institute, February 25, 2021, <https://mwi.usma.edu/with-equal-opportunity-comes-equal-responsibility-lowering-fitness-standards-to-accommodate-women-will-hurt-the-army-and-women/>.

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