Women’s movement in the Southern Cone. A qualitative comparison of its current characteristics

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1. Introduction

This paper aims to lay out the relevant characteristics of the women’s movement in the Southern Cone of Latin America, specifically in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay. It analyses the defining characteristics of the women’s movement, namely, membership and leadership as well as areas of interest of women’s movement organisations (Beckwith 2007, 313). On the other hand, it analyses the size of the organisations that are part of the women’s movement in each case. Finally, it analyses the collaboration between women’s organisations and between the organisations and state institutions. These aspects are relevant to the influence the women’s movement may have in the political agenda. The analysis takes place country by country, to make clear the characteristics of each, before comparing them. I divide the discussion for each country into three sub-sections, one that deals with the more general characteristics of the organisations, one that focuses on the alliances they establish, and one that deals with the mechanisms the organisations use for influencing policies. The information is drawn from questionnaires and interviews conducted in each country. Apart from the questionnaires, the number of organisations is also taken from the information contained in secondary sources and especially in a database I developed.

The findings support the definition of women’s movement that suggests that their members and leaders are women. In terms of the areas of interest of women’s organisations in these countries, they are one more general that refers to women’s rights and two more concrete that refer to violence against women and sexual and reproductive rights. There are, though, countries where women’s organisations collaborate for many more issues than these two concrete ones and countries where organisations do not manage to establish more permanent links for other issues. In terms of their mechanisms, women’s policy agencies are always an access point for the organisations to the executive power, but they require alternative access points when these agencies have low status. The origin of the leader of these agencies and her views at women’s issues also plays a role at the relation that women’s organisations can establish with them. On the other hand, women’s organisations relate with Congresswomen, especially when they demand legislation about violence against women, since for other issues women legislators have more disagreements. Finally, the findings also show the relevance women’s organisations give to mechanisms directed towards society, both to make it aware about women’s rights and to increase the pressure for those issues they are demanding.

2. Theoretical framework and methodology

Women’s movements are a type of social movements that make gender identity claims, with women as the major actors and leaders (Beckwith 2007, 314). Women’s movements consist of organisations, activists and supporters that deal with women’s issues in general, as well as with specific ones such as suffrage, violence against women, and abortion (Friedman 2000, 4; Paoli and Telles 1998, 67; McBride and Mazur 2010, 8). Women’s movements establish alliances with other movements around specific causes, and are often part of more diffuse structures, at national and international levels, that have a shared purpose (Beckwith 2000, 434; Keck and Sikkink 1998, 8; Khagram et al 2002; Molyneux and Razavi 2005, 999 – 1004). The inclusion of many diverse actors in the conceptualisation of women’s movements renders the analysis more complex, since the

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1 This paper is based on the content of my PhD thesis in Government at the University of Essex, degree that I obtained in 2013.
criteria for whom to include and exclude get somehow unclear. Consequently, I here stick to a more traditional approach that includes mainly women’s organisations and their supporters. Thus, the analysis focuses on these types of organisations, their areas of activity, and their strategies.

Women’s movements are important actors in the development not only of awareness of the population but also of a public political agenda about gender issues. The literature regarding social movements and women’s movements has primarily developed in Europe and North America (Costain 1992; McAdam et al 1996) and only a few authors have tried to apply it to Latin America (i.e. Foweraker 1995; Jaquette 1994; Waylen 2007, 69 - 91) and other areas of the world (i.e. Johnson and Brunell 2006), which makes of interest to focus more analysis on women’s movements in Latin America. The understanding of these movements is critical to the analysis of their chances of success in their areas of interest. In particular, this paper focuses on the characteristics of women’s movements in four South American countries. Countries with similar context, history and where there are active movements which origins can be traced to the dictatorial past of the countries. I use a qualitative small-n comparison in four countries of the Southern Cone in Latin America, namely Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay. My main forms of data collection are questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with members of women’s organisations (Landman 2008, 70; Faure 1994, 310; Lijphart 1971, 687; Mason 2002, 26 – 29).

All four countries in my research had military governments in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. These governments aimed to restructure society (Craske 1999, 31). During the period of military government many social movements arose whose action was focused on human rights. Many women’s organisations were established in this context. Subsequently, during the transitions to democracy, there was a demobilisation of the social movements, which debated entering the institutional arena once democracy was established (Waylen 2007, 88). Many women that became part of social movements during the dictatorial regimes decided not to take part in the institutional arena (Craske 1999, 5 – 57). The most clear and easily identifiable parts of the women’s movements are women’s organisations, which is why I chose to conduct the interviews and questionnaires with such organisations. Women’s organisations are, for this research, a group of people who deal with women’s issues, with significant female participants, whose leaders are mainly women, with a minimal infrastructure consisting of e.g. mail, webpage, and telephone.

Given that there was no available list of the women’s organisations, I created a database of the name, website, e-mail, type of organisation, year of creation, focus of activity, area of work, address, and telephone number of women’s organisations. I found these organisations on webpages, on lists of social movements and women’s movements organisations, through suggestions given by other organisations, and through links included on the organisations’ webpages. Building a database of the organisations runs the risk of leaving some organisations off the list (Mason 2002, 140; Gillham 2008, 26). There are a wide array of measures that can be taken to reduce this risk; I chose to use several sources of information. Therefore, although I might have excluded small organisations, I am quite confident that I included the most relevant organisations in each country under analysis. I finally arrived at a list of 38 organisations in Argentina, 66 in Brazil, 41 in Chile, and 25 in Uruguay. I sent questionnaires to each organisation and I interviewed organisations in one city of each country. For the interviews, I chose the city in which I found more organisations working for women’s issues and in which, according to the answers to the questionnaires, I could find more organisations and the most important women’s
organisations. Consequently, I conducted interviews in Buenos Aires in Argentina, Sao Paulo in Brazil, Santiago in Chile, and Montevideo in Uruguay.

I received 9 completed questionnaires from organisations in Argentina, 11 from organisations in Brazil, 12 from organisations in Chile, and 11 from Uruguayan organisations. The fieldwork, in which I conducted the personal interviews, took place after receiving the completed questionnaires. However, in exceptional cases I got the answers to the questionnaires in person during the fieldwork. I conducted every interview myself, and the interviewees signed a consent form agreeing to take part in the interview and stating whether the interviews could be cited verbatim and whether their names could be mentioned in the transcripts (Gibbs 2007, 7; Kvale 2007, 24 - 28). I mention only those interviewees that allowed me to mention their name. I interviewed members of 7 organisations in Buenos Aires, 10 in Sao Paulo, 8 in Santiago, and 8 in Montevideo. The organisations I interviewed were staffed organisations that had their contact details updated and available. Most of them had some influence in their respective countries. Interviews covered aspects of the women’s movement in the country, the relationship between the organisation and the political and social spheres, and the mechanisms that the organisations use to influence laws and policies. I had a list of open questions that served as a guide for the interview and I also asked questions for clarification and further questions about topics that interviewees were narrating (Kvale 2007, 55 – 65; Rathbun 2008, 698).

I analysed open questions using both descriptive statistics and thematic coding (Gillham 2008, 74 – 82; Gibbs 2007, 38 – 54; Kvale 2007, 104 – 109). Additionally, I analysed closed questions using descriptive statistics, classifying the answers per country, to understand patterns of similarities and differences (Gillham 2008, 74 – 82; Seale 1999, 119 – 135; King et al 1994, 62). To the interviews and open questions from the questionnaires I applied a set of index categories derived both from my theoretical framework and directly from the content of the interviews (Mason 2002, 150 – 156; Gillham 2008, 92 – 98; Gibbs 2007, 38 – 54; Kvale 2007, 104 – 109). The use of the system of indexing across the whole data set allows me to explore patterns and differences in the characteristics of the women’s movements and in the mechanisms they employ. Further it allows me to compare different type of organisations in different countries (Mason 2002, 165; Gibbs 2007, 38 – 54; Kvale 2007, 104 – 109). I produced twelve categories of between four to seventeen themes. I produced one file per category and per country. The final product was forty eight files with the relevant information that all women’s organisations in a country gave about a specific category, such as “women's movement”. Consequently, this system allowed me to analyse information about a topic focusing on the similarities or differences between organisations in each country and also to look at a country as a whole, examining all the organisations and comparing these results with those of the rest of the countries.

3. Women’s organisations characteristics

3.1 Argentina

3.1.1 General characteristics of women’s organisations

The results from the search carried out to build my database show that there are in Argentina a small group of important organisations and a longer list of small organisations that either do not hold a webpage, do not have a phone number, or do not answer incoming calls, which reflects the serious limitations to their resources (see also Rein 2011a, 36). Similar conclusion can be drawn from the answers given to the questionnaires
regarding the issue at hand: women’s movement organisations are often small, having a single office and a small number of staff, in some cases hired only on a per specific project basis. 50% of the staff work part time, and sometimes 35 or 30 hours per week, which also shows insufficient funding. It is common for organisations to use volunteers. Only two organisations have more than 10 people hired, of which one has 11 and the other 13. When asked whether they are paid and how many people are paid respondents would commonly answer either that they are not paid or that they are paid when they have projects that have funding. They stress that this is not enough. In addition, some respondents explain that the way to contribute is by keeping their job and volunteer for some hours in the organisation.

### Table 1 Size of Argentinean women’s organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of surveyed organisations</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisations with 1 office</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of staff</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisations with no paid staff</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisations with staff number over than 10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of staff working full time</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of volunteers</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Questionnaires

Membership and leadership of women’s organisations in Argentina consist predominantly of women (see also Rein 2011a, 31). Results from the questionnaires show that the organisations have an almost exclusively female membership and leadership. In fact the average is 96% of women both as staff and as volunteers, with no organisation membership under 69% female and most memberships (6 out of 9) exclusively female. In those exceptional cases in which not all members are women, certainly most of them are. Clearly in Argentina the members and leaders of the women’s organisations are women, in harmony with the women’s movement definition referred to above. Finally, the last defining characteristic of women’s movement refers to the area of activity of the women’s movements organisations. Figure 1 shows the results from the answers to the questionnaires. Columns in black indicate the sum of two or more areas of activity that form part of a broader type. Thus “women’s rights sum” includes “gender”, “women’s rights”, and “gender equality in the labour market”; “Violence against women sum” includes “violence”, “sexual abuse”, and “traffic of women”; and “political rights sum” is the sum of “public policies” and “political participation”.

Figure 1 Areas of activity of Argentinean women’s organisations

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2 Table 1 contains a summary of this information.
The answers to the questionnaires normally included more than one area of activity and often included the general area of women’s rights followed by particular issues, such as traffic of women or sexual and reproductive rights (see also Rein 2011a, 32). The most relevant areas the organisations deal with are violence against women, which includes domestic violence, and sexual reproductive rights.

3.1.2 Women’s organisations’ alliances

Beyond the specific focus that every organisation has, women’s organisations have collaborated with each other on a series of issues. For example, immediately after the end of the dictatorship the women’s movement as a whole mobilised to campaign for shared parental responsibility, divorce, and in the nineties for the quota law (Barrancos 2007, 273; personal interviews: Graciela González and Victoria Váccaro, 2009). The issues that currently mobilise the movement as a whole are the new integral law against violence, the battle against traffic of women, and the decriminalisation and legalisation of abortion (personal anonymous interview and interviews: Victoria Váccaro and Fabiana Tuñez, 2009; Malacalza 2007, 26; Chejter and Laudano 2002, 44 - 45). I asked organisations in the questionnaire if they work or collaborate with other women’s organisations, with human rights organisations, and with civil society organisations. All the responding organisations answered yes to every type of organisation. What varies is the frequency. The following figure shows this variation.

Figure 2 Women’s organisations alliances in Argentina

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3 Law 26.485, law of integral protection to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women from the spheres where they develop their interpersonal relations, approved in March 2009 (Ley de Protección Integral para Prevenir, Sancionar y Erradicar la Violencia contra las Mujeres en los Ámbitos en que Desarrollen sus Relaciones Interpersonales).
The figure shows a constant collaboration between women’s organisations, a quite regular collaboration with civil society organisations, and a more variable collaboration with human rights organisations. With more or less regularity, women’s organisations do collaborate with each other and with other organisations, which has a positive impact on the strength that they can potentially develop by means of these alliances, for example in terms of the amount of people that can be gathered in public demonstrations. Along with their alliances with these organisations, women’s organisations also establish strategic alliances with student organisations, scientific associations, national and provincial parliaments, the University of Buenos Aires, executive and judicial power, political parties, and labour associations. The fact that respondents mentioned state power as well as universities and scientific associations indicates that the organisations can potentially exert influence on the intellectual activity of the country as well as upon the political agenda, though more as individual organisations than as a movement. I did not include in the questionnaire a question about collaboration with organisations in other Latin American countries and none of the respondents mentioned these organisations in their answers. However, my database shows that there are in Argentina organisations that are one office of an organisation with multiple branches, with the rest of the offices of these organisations in other Latin American countries. Moreover, women’s organisations webpages do in fact show collaboration.

In addition to the collaboration with the above organisations, the women’s movement in Argentina has started to collaborate with grassroots organisations, which have important mobilisation power in the country (see also Rein 2011a, 12). The grassroots movement became important as a result of the social and economic crisis of 2001 (Barrancos 2007, 277). This movement includes a very important female presence and since they started

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4 Chejter and Laudano (2002, 15) suggest a similar pattern of collaboration between women’s organisations and human rights organisations. Moreover, they stress that there are no institutional alliances between the women’s movement and the human rights’ movement, although there are a number of feminists participating in human rights organisations and activists of those organisations who support specific feminist causes.


7 Diverse organisations of workers and unemployed are part of this movement. They mobilise regarding labour and economic issues.
being politically influential the women’s movement has started to consider the benefit of establishing alliances with the grassroots movement.

Furthermore, women’s organisations in Argentina hold annual meetings in which women from all over the country gather, with participation numbers varying from 600 in the second meeting in 1987 to around 25,000 after 2000 (Alma and Lorenz 2009, 55 – 76; Chejter and Laudano 2002, 47; Rein 2011a, 38). The meetings encourage interaction between women’s organisations and help to establish common strategies and goals (personal interviews: Victoria Vaccaro and Fabiana Tuñez, 2009). From 2001 there has also been a virtual network facilitating women’s organisations activity: the Women’s Informative Network in Argentina (Red Informativa de Mujeres de Argentina, RIMA)8. This network uses the internet to greatly increase the dimensions of the movement’s work and the availability of relevant information about women’s issues (personal interview: Graciela González, 2009).9 There are also some relevant magazines that are circulated through the internet (personal interview: Graciela González, 2009). In Argentina there is clearly a lot of interaction, discussion that contributes to the agreement on aims, activity, and strategies.

In contrast with this positive picture showing a constant collaboration, the literature and the interviewees suggest that this relationship is not really so constant and the alliances are established only to meet specific goals, instead of on a permanent basis (Chejter and Laudano 2002, 44). They suggest that the organisations are not publically present as a movement and they are not leading public discourse (Bellotti 2003, 60). One of the interviewees suggests that women’s organisations “have a good ability to react, but not a good ability to introduce new issues in the public agenda” (personal interview: Andrea Mariño, 2009). Interviewees mentioned that they work together for specific projects.

In general, the interviewees suggest that the great variety within the women’s movement makes it difficult to establish a common language and to agree on goals, priorities, and strategies (personal anonymous interview and interview: Fabiana Tuñez, Andrea Mariño and Victoria Vaccaro, 2009). There is also the problem of the lack of resources; thus the completion of a great number of tasks depends on the work of just a few people, which makes it difficult to devote sufficient human resources to the alliances (personal anonymous interview and interview: Andrea Mariño, 2009). The interviewees’ perception of the movement is that it was much stronger in the first years of democratisation, and after a period of subsequent weakening it is strengthening again, with very strong divisions caused by the movement’s diversity (personal interviews: Andrea Mariño, Graciela Gónzalez, Victoria Vaccaro, 2009).

3.1.3 Mechanisms that women’s movements use for influencing policies

All Argentinean organisations surveyed seek to influence policies regarding domestic violence against women (DVAW) and 89% of the organisations aim to influence bills.10 In the questionnaire I asked how they intend to achieve this influence. I proposed a series of alternatives that include meetings with the leader of the women’s policy agency (WPA), with the staff of WPA, with staff of other ministries, with sympathetic legislators, and with legislators that are part of the committee dealing with DVAW. I also included in the

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8 For more information see: www.rimaweb.com.ar
9 See www.rimaweb.com.ar
10 The PhD research focused on DVAW and this is the reason why the mechanisms suggested are referring to this topic. Nevertheless, I asked whether they use the same mechanisms when they intend to influence policies on other topics and most of the cases they reply affirmatively.
options the use of public campaigns and publications in the media and I gave them the option to include alternative mechanisms. Figure 3 illustrates the answers.

**Figure 3** Mechanisms used to influence the political and social sphere in Argentina

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanism</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leader WPA</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff WPA</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Ministries</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympathetic legislators</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislators of DVAW committee</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public campaigns</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications in the media</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Questionnaires.

These answers show that women’s organisations use a broad range of mechanisms to influence policies and legislation for DVAW. They also show that there are very clear emphases in the mechanisms they choose. In fact there is a clear tendency to use mechanisms directed towards the social sphere. With respect to the political sphere there is a clear preference for interacting with legislators over the WPA and other institutions of the executive power. The additional answers from respondents show that they also interact with the judicial power and they intend to influence policies through the training of public servants. The widespread mechanisms and the organisations’ relations with different institutions reflect the wide range of options that the organisations have when seeking to relate with the state, but also show that they cannot rely on their relationship with the WPA to influence policies. I asked in the questionnaire if the organisations use the same mechanisms when they seek to influence policies and bills about other issues. 78% of the answers are positive, and at some points respondents refer to the mechanisms they use irrespective of the topic they are dealing with.

Figure 3 shows that women’s organisations do not establish constant contact with the *Consejo Nacional de la Mujer* (CNM), the Argentinean WPA. The meetings that members of the organisations hold are mainly with the staff of CNM, more than with its leader. The lack of permanent contact results from the critical view that the organisations have about CNM. Interviewees suggest that CNM does not have suitable staff for the role this institution should play, nor does it have the economic resources to carry out its functions, and it has changed its focus from women to the family, which is perceived negatively by interviewees (anonymous interview and interviews: Andrea Mariño, Victoria Vaccaro, and Fabiana Tuñez, 2009). According to the narratives of these interviewees CNM lacks influence, one reason why it cannot be relied upon to influence public policies. Nevertheless, as figure 4 shows women’s organisations do establish some contact. Victoria Vaccaro (interview, 2009), for example, says that there is a commission to give advice for the new law against violence and that many women’s organisations worked with the CNM. In addition, figure 4 shows that women’s organisations do not try to influence policies and bills through contact with the leader of CNM. Information from the personal interviews sheds light on the reasons. Interviewees believe that leaders of CNM are not the most
suitable for the position, since they do not have knowledge and previous interest in women’s issues (interviews: Andrea Mariño and Victoria Vaccaro, 2009).\footnote{Interviewees were referring to the leader of CNM in 2009 and its previous leader.}

The information obtained from the questionnaires shows that in fact women’s organisations in Argentina relate with legislators more intensively than with the CNM and ministries. In particular, they relate with female legislators in percentages that clearly exceed the percentage in which they relate with male legislators. Interviewees mentioned that Congresswomen present all the bills about women’s issues, though they do not agree on all women’s issues. For example, interviewees stated that there is agreement about DVAW, but not about abortion (interviews: Andrea Mariño, Victoria Vaccaro and Fabiana Tuñez, 2009). The following quote illustrates the role that Congresswomen play: “women drove the domestic violence law, women drafted the bill… there is no consensus about abortion. It should not be like this, but the truth is that women drive women’s issues in the Congress, that is to say they have driven all existent laws about women’s issues…there is much more consensus about violence than about abortion, it is like it depends on the specific issue” (interview: Andrea Mariño, 2009). Interviewees also suggest that both for DVAW and other women’s issues the female caucus in Congress is key to proposing and driving the discussion and negotiating with their colleagues (interviews: Andrea Mariño and Victoria Vaccaro, 2009). Interviewees describe a good and smooth relationship with Congresswomen, who they consider to be allies (anonymous interview and interviews: Graciela González, Fabiana Tuñez, Andrea Mariño and Victoria Vaccaro, 2009). This smooth relationship results in women’s organisations drafting bills, giving advice to Congresswomen, and supporting the work of Congresswomen by lobbying their colleagues (interviews: Fabiana Tuñez, Victoria Vaccaro and Andrea Mariño, 2009; questionnaires).

3.2 Brazil

3.2.1 General characteristics of women’s organisations

The information from the database shows that women’s organisations abound in Brazil. More detailed information derived from the questionnaires shows that women’s organisations normally have one branch each, but occasionally develop some projects in areas other than that in which their branch is located (see also Rein 2011a, 38). Quite extraordinarily, there is one organisation with 27 branches, one per state, which makes this organisation the biggest in the four countries of this study. Brazil’s organisations have teams consisting of professionals, with paid personnel, and staff numbers varying from 5 to 22.\footnote{See table 2.} This suggests a professionalization of the Brazilian organisations. All the organisations surveyed have some paid staff and most of them are employed on a full time basis. Six organisations have more than 10 people hired, of which one has 12, two 15, one 18, one 19, and one 22. Moreover, although the organisations are supported by volunteers, they all have enough personnel to conduct their work; hence volunteers are in fact support, but not a replacement for paid staff. The size of the organisations is also indicated by the level of mobilisation they effect, exemplified by the Brazilian Union of Women (União Brasileira de Mulheres, UBM) which for its 7th congress mobilised more than 500 women, representing 9000 members (Chiappetta 2008, 5).

Table 2 Size of Brazilian women’s organisations
The answers to the questionnaires indicate that the organisations are big and well resourced, which contrasts with some interview responses that show that there are conflicts between the organisations because of the lack of sufficient funds. Interviewees also told of some difficulties they have with obtaining resources. Membership and leadership also consist predominantly of women. In fact, in the organisations surveyed 85% of the paid staff and 90% of the volunteers are women (see also Rein 2011a, 31). On the other hand, with respect to the areas of activity there is great diversity, more than in any of the other three countries being studied. Figure 5 shows the areas of activity of the women’s organisations, according to the answers to the questionnaires. As in figure 1, I grouped some issues together: thus “women’s rights sum” includes “gender”, “feminists debates”, and “women’s rights”; and “VAW sum” is the sum of “DVAW”, and “violence against women”. As figure 4 shows, the list of areas of activity is much longer and more varied than that of Argentinean organisations. Although emphases in this case are also put on violence against women and sexual and reproductive rights, the organisations usually specify some particular focus, e.g. education, feminism, work, health, violence, racial equality, and sexual and reproductive rights (see also Rein 2011a, 33). Moreover they focus on issues that are related to specific local areas of the country. The variety of issues addressed reflects the complexity and diversity of the women’s movement in the country as well as the problems they face when trying to deal with all the issues included in the list.

**Figure 4 Areas of activity of Brazilian women’s organisations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist debates</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s rights</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s rights sum</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVAV</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence against women</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAW sum</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public policies</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emancipation</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women and power</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s health rights</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual and reproductive rights</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity and racial equality</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s organisations</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis according to local</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Questionnaires.
3.2.2 Women’s organisations alliances

The obstacles to agreement between women’s organisations are even present when the discussion concerns issues on which there is more consent. For example, despite the fact that violence against women, and particularly DVAW, is one of the priorities of the movement (see also Teles 1993, 131), the organisations manifest their differences in the different ways they describe the problem, the solutions they propose, and the strategies they intend to use in order to promote the solution (personal anonymous interview and interview: Maria Fernanda Pereira, 2009). However, although the organisations recognise all of these differences, they have managed to act together as a movement not only to end violence against women, but also for other issues such as the legalisation of abortion and opposition to racism (personal interviews: Maria Fernanda Pereira, Liege Rocha, Maria Amelia Teles, Ana Gelati, Vera Vieira, 2009). In fact, as the data from the questionnaires shows, women’s organisations collaborate with each other constantly. Women’s organisations collaborate with civil society organisations, and especially with grassroots organisations, almost as frequently as with other women’s organisations. The women’s movement in Brazil has, in fact, an extensive base grounded on grassroots organisations. Some have actually seen the former as the extension of the latter (Alvarez 1994, 15 - 23). Particularly because of the legacy of the left, they have an extensive mass base and regular links with the poor and workers (Alvarez 1994, 15 - 23). Women’s organisations also work along with human rights organisations, although slightly less frequently than with civil society organisations (see also Rein 2011a, 39). In addition the answers to the questionnaires also show that some women’s organisations collaborate with labour unions, schools, universities, mayor’s offices, LGBT organisations, and organisations that deal with children or teenager rights. As in Argentina, interviewees did not refer to international alliances with organisations in different countries, except for Vera Vieira (personal interview, 2009) who mentioned that there is a project with organisations in 12 countries to combat together violence against women. In addition, there are organisations with branches in other countries and women’s organisations whose webpages mention their international networks.

Figure 5 Women’s organisations alliances in Brazil

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13 In fact, for all surveyed organisations DVAW is very important and 91% intend to influence bills and policies about this topic.
14 See figure 5.
15 See figure 5.
16 Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender.
17 Both at the time of the fieldwork as well as when the analysis was being conducted.
18 For example Catolicas pelo Direito de Decidir (http://www.catolicasonline.org.br/institucional/) and Comité de América Latina y el Caribe para la Defensa de los Derechos de la Mujer -CLADEM (http://www.cladem.org/).
It is clear from figure 5 that women’s organisations understand the importance of collaborating with each other. Beyond the individual alliances between the organisations, there are also more permanent examples of union among organisations, such as the World March of Women, Feminist Network for Health (Red Feminista de Salud), Coalition of Brazilian Women, national front against women’s criminalisation and abortion legalisation, and Popular Union against Racism (personal interviews: Maria Fernanda Pereira, Liege Rocha, Maria Amelia Teles, Yuri Puello, 2009).

Establishing constant relations is an achievement of the women’s organisations, or a strong need, in light of the fact that some of them also describe problems with insufficient resources, in addition to the obstacles to agreement due to the diversity of their areas of activity (personal interviews: Maria Amelia Teles, Ana Gelati, and David do Bomfin, 2009). Insufficient resources mean that staff are overloaded and lack available places to meet and material to produce and share (personal interviews: Maria Amelia Teles, Ana Gelati, and David do Bomfin, 2009). There is the perception among the interviewees that the organisations work in isolation, with some of them showing a possessive attitude toward their working projects and further some organisations showing competitiveness towards the other organisations (personal interview: Maria Amelia Teles, Ana Gelati, Yuri Puello, and David do Bomfin, 2009). However, women’s organisations in Brazil understand that the complexities of the country require them to collaborate in order to reach their goals.

3.2.3 Mechanisms that women’s movements use for influencing policies

As figure 6 shows, women’s organisations in Brazil relate with Secretaría Especial de Políticas para as Mulheres (SPM), the Brazilian WPA, and with other ministries. Within SPM they contact more its staff than its leader. According to interviewees the relationship between women’s organisations and the executive improved exponentially since the arrival of the President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and the Labour Party’s presidential success (anonymous interview and interview: Ana Gelati, 2009). It was President Lula who created the SPM, which has a positive impact in the relationship between the women’s

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20 Marcha Mundial das Mulheres. For more information see: [http://www.sof.org.br/marcha/](http://www.sof.org.br/marcha/)
21 Articulaçao de Mulheres Brasileiras, AMB. For more information see: [http://www.articulacaoemulheres.org.br/amb/](http://www.articulacaoemulheres.org.br/amb/)
22 Frente Nacional contra la Criminalización de las Mujeres y la Legalización del Aborto.
23 Unión Popular contra el Racismo.
24 Lula was the President of Brazil from 2003 to 2010. He was the President when I conducted the interviews.
organisations and the government because the organisations now have an institution inside the state to voice their suggestions, opinions, and demands (anonymous interview and interviews: Maria Amelia Teles, Ana Gelati, Maria Fernanda Pereira and Yuri Puello, 2009; Rein 2011, 14). It is important to highlight that women’s organisations collaborate with the SPM rather than Congress to develop legislation. Moreover, one interviewee suggested that before the SPM there were laws about women’s issues with a focus on public security instead of a gender perspective, which the SPM has changed (interview: Ana Gelati, 2009). Consequently the SPM has an important role for developing legislation for women’s issues.

Interviewees believe that the SPM opens a channel through which they can access the government. The organisations have established a permanent alliance with the SPM not only to influence policies depending on the SPM but also to influence other ministries to approve some policies regarding women’s issues (anonymous interview and interviews: Maria Fernanda Pereira, Liege Rocha, Vera Vieira and Ana Gelati, 2009). Some organisations have a seat within the National Council of Women’s Rights (CNDM)25 and through it with the SPM (interview: Maria Fernanda Pereira, 2009). Others relate directly with the staff and even the leader of the SPM (anonymous interview and interviews: Liege Rocha and Ana Gelati, 2009). SPM staff comes from the women’s movement which for the interviewees contributes to the good and smooth relationship between the SPM and the women’s organisations. Women’s organisations interact with the SPM both to draft bills and to develop policies about women’s issues, such as policies for the prevention of violence against women and for the prevention of women trafficking (anonymous interview and interviews: Liege Rocha, Yuri Puello, Ana Gelati, Maria Amelia Teles and Vera Vieira, 2009).

Since the creation of the SPM is so recent, interviewees could easily compare their current situation with that previous to the SPM. One interviewee explained that before SPM there was no relationship with the government in general, that the organisations had to provide more services, and that they were basically criticising the government’s work instead of collaborating (anonymous interview, 2009). According to the interviewees, before the creation of the Secretariat the organisations had to deal with different institutions of the state, such as the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education. They have not stopped relating with them, but now there is someone in the state that is really dealing with women’s issues (anonymous interview and interview: María Amelia Teles, 2009). One interviewee also suggested that before 2003, during the Presidency of Cardoso (1995 –

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25 CNDM is part of the SPM.
they were in opposition and thus they were holding meetings with the CNDM to express their view, but there was no collaboration (interview: Liege Rocha, 2009). This last aspect reflects that in this case apart from the power of the WPA the party tendency of the government can influence the relationship between the government and the women's organisations.

From the surveyed organisations only 9% answered that they try to establish their members in the government or in Congress. The percentage increases to 27% when it refers to political parties (see also Rein 11a, 45). Hence, as with Argentinean organisations, Brazilian organisations do not seek to influence the political sphere from within political positions, though interviewees recognise that they have better relations with the institutions when their members come from the women’s movement.

Brazil’s women’s organisations more frequently establish contact with the executive power than with Congress (see figure 6). Moreover, from all the mechanisms the organisations use in Brazil, those directed towards Congress are the least frequent. In fact, interviewees suggest that their contact with Congress is not smooth and in order to influence the approval of bills they first establish links with other women’s organisations, so they are a united group and they can exert more pressure (anonymous interview and interviews: Liege Rocha, Maria Amelia Teles and Maria Fernanda Pereira, 2009; Rein 2011, 13). Interviewees perceive Congress as a conservative institution which they contact because they seek to influence legislation, but they never expect major achievements (anonymous interview and interviews: Yuri Puello, Liege Rocha and Maria Amelia Teles, 2009). One of the interviewees stated that because of its focus her organisation does not establish links with Congress, except when some women’s rights are at risk (interview: Maria Fernanda Pereira, 2009).

Interviewees see the process of obtaining policies and laws dealing with women’s issues as a battle. After such policies have been approved the organisations have to be continually aware of possible backlash. For example, at the moment of the fieldwork Congress was debating a new criminal code which may change some aspects of the law regarding DVAW; hence the organisations had to be alert to stop any change that could mean a deterioration of the terms of the law (interview: Liege Rocha, 2009). One interviewee suggests that women legislators do not necessarily work for women’s issues. However, she suggests that all women know what it is to be a victim of violence in some form, including verbal, institutional, and moral violence, which is why they show greater support for the legislation against violence (interview: Maria Fernanda Pereira, 2009).

3.3 Chile

3.3.1 General characteristics of women’s organisations

Data derived from the answers to the questionnaires sent to the organisations, and summarised in table 3, show that women’s organisations usually have one office. In 9 of the 12 cases surveyed they have less than 10 staff, and 50% of the staff is employed on a part-time basis. 3 organisations have over 10 employees, of which one has 11, one 12, and one 21 (see also Rein 2011a, 40). The members of the organisations maintain that they have much more work than they are able to carry out, and often they are not paid or if they are their pay is either nominal or too low. This holds even in cases of important organisations.

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26 It is not clear from the interviewee’s statement whether she’s referring to the members of her organisation, *União Brasileira de Mulheres*, or to the women’s organisations in general.
with a significant popular following. The director of one organisation replied to my question 27 with the following detailed and illustrative account: “There is no-one full-time, we are all part-time. We all work more than that, but the salary covers I would say a fourth of a day. We get 70,000 28 Chilean pesos a month. You would understand that with that amount you do not cover the fourth part of your needs”. The following table summarises the information obtained from the answers to the questionnaires regarding the size of women’s organisations in the country.

Table 3 Size of Chilean women’s organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of surveyed organisations</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisations with 1 office</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisations with 3 offices</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of staff</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisations with no paid staff</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisations more than 10 staff</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of staff working full time</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of volunteers</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Questionnaires.

As in Brazil and Argentina, women’s organisations in Chile consist mainly of women, who constitute 89% of the staff and 93% of the volunteers. All leaders are women. One of the respondents to the questionnaire explained that this is not a requirement of the organisation, but it is the natural result of its focus on gender issues. Thus, women’s organisations in the country follow the tendency of the rest of the countries under analysis and confirm one of the constitutive characteristics of the concept of women’s movement (Beckwith 2007, 313). In a different vein, the areas of interest of women’s organisations in Chile at first sight show important variation. However, most of these issues can be grouped together in main categories. In figure 7 I include some categories that group together those included in the organisations’ answers. In particular, “women’s rights sum” includes general categories like “emancipation”, “social exclusion”, “gender relations” and “women’s rights”. In addition, “VAW sum” includes all types of violence against women mentioned in the answers and “sexual and reproductive rights sum” includes general categories of these rights and abortion. There could be also a fourth category including citizenship and political rights, but I did not include this in order to avoid over-extending the meaning of the concepts that the organisations suggested. Nevertheless, these four are the main focus of the organisations: women’s rights in general and particular focus on violence against women, sexual and reproductive rights, and political rights.

Figure 7 Areas of activity of Chilean women’s organisations

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27 In this case the questionnaire was answered in person. However, since this answer refers to the questionnaire and is anonymous, I will not cite the respondent.

28 On June 26th 2014 this amount was equivalent to USD127 (http://www.xe.com).
3.3.2 Women’s organisations alliances

Organisations not only work to stop violence against women in isolation; they also collaborate with other organisations, making this a battle of the whole movement. In fact, the organisations created in 1990 the Chilean network against domestic and sexual violence that devotes its action to this issue and brings together women’s organisations and civil society organisations at a national level (see also Rein 2011a, 40). Women’s organisations also collaborate, though with less emphasis on sexual and reproductive rights (see also Quevedo 2003, 200; Araujo 2002, 82). However, particularly in the case of abortion the organisations hold different views regarding its treatment, appropriate strategies, and the treatment of arising problems, which is in a way linked to their different religious approaches (see also Quevedo 2003, 82 – 92).

Data from the answers to the questionnaires show that women’s organisations work constantly with each other, and also, although less constantly, with human rights and social movement organisations. Answers to the questionnaire also show that particular organisations establish individual collaboration with universities and academic institutions, organisations of young people, and organisations that deal with migration, labour and agricultural matters. In addition, several respondents noted that they collaborate with women’s organisations from other countries in Latin America. This is quite systematic and shows the relevance of international networking to domestic organisations. Respondents’ answers help us understand that they establish fewer alliances with human rights organisations than with social movement organisations because they hold the view that human rights organisations still focus on issues traditionally related to the dictatorial past and they have not included other issues like women’s rights. The literature also suggests a pattern of reciprocal support for specific issues but not permanent alliance, because the women’s rights agenda has not been incorporated in the agenda of the human rights movement (Araujo 2002, 76).

Figure 8 Women’s organisations alliances in Chile

29 Red chilena contra la violencia doméstica y sexual, RED. For more information see http://www.nomasviolenciacontramujeres.cl/
30 See figure 8.
Personal interviews convey an account of the collaboration between women’s organisations different to that indicated in figure 8. Interviewees maintain that there is an environment of distrust among the organisations that is aggravated by an idiosyncratic national characteristic that consists in believing that those who are not with them are against them (personal interviews: Ana María Portugal, Paulina Weber and Lorena Fries, 2009). They have problems with debating about the topics and therefore with agreeing on how they understand those topics, what they want, and the strategies they will use to obtain it (personal interviews with Lorena Fries, Carolina Peyrin, Gloria Maira, Mafalda Galdames, Paulina Weber, Rosario Puga, 2009). Additionally, much of the discord among the organisations has its roots in the time of the dictatorship (personal anonymous interview and interviews: Paulina Weber, Ana María Portugal, Gloria Maira, 2009). Such discord is exacerbated by the lack of resources, which have been decreasing over time. As a result they have to compete for the same limited resources, a competition that generates tension among the organisations (personal interviews: Ana María Portugal and Gloria Maira, 2009). Moreover, when we spoke about the advantage of establishing alliances, many of them gave reasons in support of the alliances, but spoke as if alliances do not really exist (personal anonymous interview and interviews: Carolina Peyrin, Gloria Maira, Mafalda Galdames, Rosario Puga and Ana María Portugal, 2009). Finally, most of the collaboration concerns violence against women, and lately for the emergency pill, but not for all issues (Quevedo 2003, 156; Araujo 2002, 77 – 79; personal interviews: Mafalda Galdames, Rosario Puga, 2009).

Interviewees have a critical view of the women’s movement. They suggest that at the end of the dictatorship it was standing at the peak of its strength and with the re-establishment of democracy it gradually got weaker. Interviewees attribute this to reluctance to cause problems for the new democratic governments, which created a tendency towards demobilisation (personal anonymous interview and interviews: Ana María Portugal, Rosario Puga, Paulina Weber, Mafalda Galdames, Gloria Maira, 2009). There was at the time a division between those organisations with a political focus, namely the integrationists, who wanted to participate from inside political parties and be incorporated into the government, and those that thought they should continue their efforts inside the organisations and outside of the government (Chuchryk 1994, 76; Araujo 2002, 68). Further, their external funding was curtailed and the organisations started to have problems sustaining themselves (personal interview: Lorena Fries, 2009). Some maintain that from the year 2000 the movement has been in a new stage, in which the organisations are overcoming their differences and managing to establish alliances on new issues (Rein 2011a, 41). From 2007
there has been a new initiative\textsuperscript{31} to integrate women’s organisations and to help generate a space to debate and agree on the proposals. This forum covers a wide range of women’s issues,\textsuperscript{32} which could certainly help to broaden the restricted area of issues on which women’s organisations were establishing alliances.

3.3.3 Mechanisms that women’s movements use for influencing policies

Figure 9 shows the results to the question about what mechanism the organisations use to influence policies and laws. These results differ from the results in the previous two countries. In fact, there are no clear emphases as there were both in Argentina and Brazil. There is though a higher tendency to privilege mechanisms directed to society, such as campaigns and publications in the media. Within Congress the results show a slightly higher tendency to contact sympathetic legislators than more formal committees dealing with DVAW. Finally, within the executive there is a higher tendency to interact with the WPA than with other ministries. Respondents added some of their own mechanisms to the suggested questionnaire answers. Most of these mechanisms are directed towards the social sphere. For example, organisations organise seminars about DVAW, organise demonstrations, and petition Congress or the executive, pressing them to adopt some measure or bill. The organisations also focus on having their own publications and one has created a radio station. Finally, one organisation uses emblematic lawsuits to press for a change in public policies. None of the surveyed organisations seek to establish their members in positions in the executive to influence policies and laws, only 8% seek to establish their members in Congress, and 8% intend to establish their members in political parties.

Figure 9 Mechanisms used to influence the political and social sphere in Chile\textsuperscript{33}

![Mechanisms Used to Influence Political and Social Sphere](image)

Source: Questionnaires.

Women’s organisations are quite critical about Servicio Nacional de la Mujer (SERNAM), the Chilean WPA. Their objections relate to SERNAM’s power and to its leader. The objection to the former is that SERNAM does not have enough power and resources (interviews: Paulina Weber, Gloria Maira, Paulina Maturana and Lorena Fries, 2009), though it is one of

\textsuperscript{31} This initiative is the Observatorio de Género y Equidad (Gender and Equity Monitor). For more information see http://www.observatorioeneroviderazgo.cl.

\textsuperscript{32} See http://www.observatorioneneroviderazgo.cl.

\textsuperscript{33} 3 of the surveyed organisations do not intend to influence laws and policies on DVAW and therefore did not answer the question about the mechanisms they use, which is why all the percentages are lower. If I only include the organisations that want to influence laws and policies the percentages become: 67% meet with the leader and staff of SERNAM and with legislators of the DV committee; 44% meet with staff of other ministries; 78% meet with sympathetic legislators and publish in the media; and 89% conduct campaigns. These percentages show a picture similar to the percentages seen in the other countries.
the WPAs with higher status, together with the current Brazilian WPA. The criticisms regarding the leader relate to the fact that the leader comes from one of the most conservative parties among the parties of the Concertación, which restricts the leader from adopting some policies that women’s organisations aim to obtain (interview: Gloria Maira; Macaulay 2006, 135; Rein 2011, 7; Informe Sombra a CEDAW 2003-2006). These objections are likely to be the reason why there is not a higher percentage of organisations interacting with SERNAM’s leader and staff. Nevertheless, they do collaborate. The collaboration is quite frequently established by each organisation with SERNAM to advise SERNAM about violence or other topics, to give it information and develop material that SERNAM can use, to carry out programs and offer services for SERNAM, and to train personnel from SERNAM or from another public sector body (anonymous interview and interviews: Rosario Puga, Carolina Peyrin, and Paulina Weber, 2009 and 2010).

Women’s organisations also collaborate with SERNAM, and with some Congresswomen when they seek to influence legislation regarding women’s issues (interviews: Carolina Peyrin, Gloria Maira, Mafalda Galdámez, and Paulina Weber, 2009). The organisations establish contacts and collaborate with different government institutions. For instance, around 40 organisations take part in an advisory council for gender politics with the Ministry of Health (interviews: Gloria Maira and Carolina Peyrin, 2009 and 2010), and there is also a permanent fund for the strengthening of civil society provided by the division of social organisations. One interviewee stated that her organisation organises an inter-sector dialogue about violence against women and that 8 of the 11 sectors involved in the implementation of the policy against violence attended (interview: Carolina Peyrin, 2009). However, although organisations interact with SERNAM and with the executive, the interviewees believe that the government does not listen to civil society and does not establish constant channels of interaction to receive opinions and proposals from civil society (anonymous interview and interviews: Paulina Weber, Gloria Maira and Lorena Fries, 2009).

With respect to the relationship between women’s organisations and Congress, although figure 9 shows slightly more interaction with Congress than with the government, the interviewees describe this as quite a difficult and distant relationship. The interviewees repeatedly mention two current and one former Congresswoman who have been essential in bringing women’s organisations petitions and suggestions into Congress (anonymous interview and interviews: Paulina Weber, and Gloria Maira, 2009). They introduced bills for sexual and reproductive rights, about DVAW, and against femicide (anonymous interview and interview: Gloria Maira, 2009). There are a couple of exceptional cases in which organisations have established a more constant relationship with the whole of Congress (interviews: Lorena Fries, Paulina Maturana, and Carolina Peyrin, 2009 and 2010).

Two of the organisations have included among their strategies contact with Congress and after some years they believe they have managed to establish themselves as a qualified opinion inside the institution (interview: Lorena Fries, Paulina Maturana and Carolina Peyrin, 2009 and 2010). Nevertheless, even in this case where the organisation has found a way to interact with Congress, the interviewee explains that the final outcome does not necessarily incorporate her organisation’s suggestions. In sum, women’s organisations in some way or another manage to influence some legislation, but mainly legislation to which

34 For more information see: http://www.participemos.gob.cl/index.php/sobre-la-dos
35 Examples of these sectors are SERNAM, the public criminal defence (public institution that provides defence to those who cannot pay a private attorney), the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Public Security, and the Police.
there is not much opposition. Additionally, they influence the existence of the legislation, but not necessarily the content.

3.4 Uruguay

3.4.1 General characteristics of women’s organisations

The information regarding the size of the organisations in Uruguay needs to be analysed more carefully than in the other three cases in analysis, since the aggregate data differs from the general data. Table 4 shows the summary of the information collected from the questionnaires. This data shows that most of the surveyed organisations have one office, while one organisation has two offices and one has four offices. The total number of paid staff is 121. However, one of the organisations has 60 employees. This means that 10 organisations really have only 61 employees between them; if we discount the largest organisation, the staff number for the Uruguayan organisations is only higher than the number of staff in Argentinean organisations. Of the organisations that have more than 10 employees, two have 12, one 24, and one 60. On the other extreme, 3 of the surveyed organisations have no staff at all. All the organisations have 48 full time personnel. However, the organisation with 60 staff has 25 working full time. Therefore the other 10 organisations have a total of 23 full time personnel between them, which changes the picture. Additional characteristics observed during the fieldwork or referred to by interviewees include the fact that some people work in more than one organisation, and that they only spend a couple of hours with the organisation, if they spend any time with the organisation at all. Finally, one of the organisations does not really have a physical place; the one location they use is borrowed. Consequently, except for the large organisation that affects the aggregated data, the organisations in Uruguay are smaller than in the other three countries. However, considering the overall size of the country the broad picture of the country does not differ so much from the other cases.

Table 4 Size of Uruguayan women’s organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of surveyed organisations</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisations with 1 office</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisations with 2 to 4 offices</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of staff</td>
<td>121*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisations with no paid staff</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisations with staff number over 10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of staff working full time</td>
<td>48*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of organisations without fulltime staff</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of volunteers</td>
<td>77**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Questionnaires. *One organisation has 60 paid staff and 25 full time staff, which has an important effect on the final sum. **2 organisations did not answer this question. Consequently, the 77 volunteers are members of only 9 of the organisations.
Similar to the other cases under analysis, women’s organisations in Uruguay consist mainly of women (see also Rein 2011a, 31). In fact, of the organisations that answered the survey, 89% of their paid staff and 98% of their volunteers are women. Also, and as a natural consequence, their leaders are women. Therefore, after reviewing the four countries of this research, it is possible to confirm that women’s movement organisations in these cases have an almost exclusively female membership and leadership. Therefore, all the four countries meet the criteria given by Beckwith (2007, 313) as defining qualities of women’s movements. The situation in all cases is so similar and so clearly indicative of the membership and leadership of the organisations that there is no need to give a second evaluation of the information collected.

Data from the questionnaires show that the surveyed women’s organisations set the range of their interests under the scope of general issues, such as women’s rights. As in the previous cases, I grouped together some topics and I made a black column with the sum of some topics. Thus, “women’s rights sum” consists of “gender”, “feminism” and “women’s rights”; “VAW sum” consists of “DVAW” and “violence against women”. Apart from general issues, the most recurrent areas of activity are DVAW and more general violence against women. Some other topics that appear to be more relevant are public policies, education, and labour equality, and secondary issues such as citizenship, economic issues, and communication. Although the answers do not reflect the importance of sexual and reproductive rights, from the personal answers this appears to be a very important issue. For example, when the answers to the question about the areas of activity include women’s rights, interviewees could further explain that they focus on sexual and reproductive rights and particularly on the decriminalisation of abortion (personal interviews in Uruguay, 2009).

Figure 10 Areas of activity of Uruguayan women’s organisations

![Areas of activity of Uruguayan women’s organisations](image)

Source: Questionnaires.

3.4.2 Women’s organisations alliances

Legalisation and decriminalisation of abortion is not only one of the areas of activity of specific organisations, but also one of the issues that make women’s organisations work together, as part of a unified movement (personal anonymous interview and interviews: Ana Maria Nocetti and Rosana Medina, 2009). The organisations also battle for the end of DVAW and violence against women, both as a united movement and as part of every organisation’s focus of activity (personal interviews: Flor Meza and Rosana Medina). One
of the interviewees expresses the collaboration in the following terms: “there are issues that have made women get organised into one movement, like the law for the sexual and reproductive health and the law regarding DVAW, but there is not a one single agenda of the women’s movement in Uruguay...there is a general objective, with strong focus on political participation, sexual health and violence” (personal interview: Rosana Medina 2009). According to the answers to the questionnaires all the surveyed organisations collaborate with other women’s organisations, with human rights organisations, and 91% of them with civil society organisations. As in the previous cases, there is variation in the frequency of the collaboration. Figure 11 shows that women’s organisations collaborate almost constantly with each other and regularly, though less consistently, with human rights and civil society organisations. In this case interviewees often mentioned their organisation’s alliances with organisations in other countries. In particular they mentioned alliances that work on a project concerning sexual and reproductive health (personal anonymous interview and interview: Flor Meza, 2009).

Figure 11 Women’s organisations alliances in Uruguay

Source: Questionnaires.

Women’s organisations establish strategic alliances with each other for some issues and are members of two umbrella organisations. The focus of these two organisations helps us understand which issues bring organisations to work as a united movement. The most important is the National Monitoring Commission, created just after the Beijing Conference, whose main objective is to monitor public policies (Johnson 2002, 98; personal interview: Estela García, 2009; Rein 2011a, 35). CNS covers the whole spectrum of women’s rights (Johnson 2002, 99). The second umbrella organisation is the Uruguayan network against sexual and domestic violence, created in 1992 (Red Uruguaya contra la Violencia Doméstica y Sexual 2005, 7). This organisation brings together organisations to collaborate in the battle about DVAW (Red Uruguaya contra la Violencia Doméstica y Sexual 2005, 7). From the interviews it appears that although most organisations are part of both umbrella organisations, they are more active in one than the other, a fact influenced by their areas of activity, work overload, and the organisations’ particular views.

In recent years women’s organisations have also collaborated with labour movement organisations (personal anonymous interview and interviews: Flor Meza, Rosana Medina, 2009). The labour movement is very strong in Uruguay. In the eighties there was a debate

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36 Comisión Nacional de Seguimiento, CNS.
37 See also http://www.chasque.net/frontpage/comision/01acerca.htm
38 Red Uruguaya contra la violencia doméstica y sexual, Red Uruguaya.
39 See also http://www.violenciadestesta.org.uy/lared.php
about women’s incorporation in the labour movement and the question of whether the latter would include the gender perspective (Espino 1991, 128; González 2004, 145). Nowadays the labour movement not only includes that perspective (Johnson 2002, 109), but it also establishes alliances on issues common to the labour and women’s movements (personal anonymous interview and interviews: Flor Meza, Rosana Medina, 2009; Rein 2011a, 42).

Women’s organisations do collaborate with each other and participate in umbrella organisations. Nevertheless, interviewees have a critical view about the real strength of the women’s movement. They hold the view that the women’s movement was stronger just after the dictatorship and that although currently their number has increased, they have not converged into a united movement (personal anonymous interview and interviews: Ana María Nocetti, Rosana Medina, Carina Bordes and Magda Batista, 2009). They observe that they work together on issues such as violence against women and abortion but nothing else beyond this (personal anonymous interview and interview: Rosana Medina, 2009).

3.4.3 Mechanisms that women’s movements use for influencing policies

Figure 12 shows the answers to question about which mechanisms women’s organisations use to influence policies and laws about DVAW. These results indicate less of a clear emphasis in terms of tactics than in any of the other three countries. They show that surveyed organisations use all the suggested mechanisms with the same intensity and that they privilege above all the use of campaigns. They also show a slightly higher tendency to relate with the executive rather than the legislature and within the executive with other ministries rather than the WPA. Apart from the suggested mechanisms the respondents also mentioned providing training in DVAW and women’s rights to groups of women and to politicians. According to one interviewee the INM provides services but does not have a high capacity to do so, and hence the organisations cover the gap left by the INM, the Uruguayan WPA (anonymous interview, 2009). Organisations also monitor policies, which includes an evaluation of the advances and obstacles from the organisations’ perspective, as well as their demands regarding the policies that should exist (interview: Estela García, 2009). They also try to influence policies through the generation of material and research to produce political analysis and debates, and via the submission of shadow reports to CEDAW. Answers to the questionnaire show that women’s organisation use the same mechanisms for DVAW and other women’s issues.

Figure 12 Mechanisms used to influence the political and social sphere in Uruguay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanism</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leader WPA</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff WPA</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Ministries</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympathetic legislators</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislators of DVAW committee</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public campaigns</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications in the media</td>
<td>55%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Questionnaires.

INM has opened a door inside the government for women’s organisations, especially since Carmen Veramendi, a woman from one of the women’s organisations, is the director of the
INM (CNS Mujeres 2008, 111; anonymous interview and interviews: Ana Maria Nocetti, Mabel Simois, Rosana Medina, Carina Bordes, and Magda Batista, 2009). In fact some organisations execute programs for INM, like the Instituto Mujer y Sociedad, which offers psychological, legal, and social assistance in cases of DVAW in one city of the country (interview: Carina Bordes, and Magda Batista, 2009). The rest of the organisations that interact with the INM do so through the Red Uruguaya in the National Consultative Council to deal with DVAW (interviews: Rosana Medina, Ana Maria Nocetti, 2009). Interviewees recognise that INM has implemented programs and policies and that it is working toward the betterment of the condition of women (anonymous interview and interviews: Mabel Simois, Flor Meza, Estela Garcia, Rosana Medina, Alicia Canepale, Carina Bordes, and Magda Batista, 2009). However, the interviewees believe that the INM lacks the resources, staff, and power to bring about real changes in the condition of women. In fact, most of their positive view is due to the role of the current leader of INM and due to the comparison between the INM and the previous WPA (anonymous interview and interviews: Ana Maria Nocetti, Mabel Simois, Estela Garcia, Flor Meza, Rosana Medina, Carina Bordes, and Magda Batista, 2009). Consequently, although the INM does not have enough power and it is a very new institution, interviewees believe that it shows a positive and important change with respect to the previous WPAs and it has given the organisations a place inside the government that they can permanently access.

Within the executive power organisations interact, apart from the INM, with the Ministry of Health, as well as with municipalities and local authorities (CEDAW 2007, 32; anonymous interviews and interviews: Rosana Medina, Estela Garcia, Carina Bordes, and Magda Batista, 2009). Normally women’s organisations have a good relationship with Congress, especially with the women’s caucus, though not all organisations have a constant relationship with Congress. In one case the interviewee commented that the organisation wants to keep some distance from Congress, in order to be able to criticise the institution (interview: Mabel Simois, 2009). Normally the relationship that organisations establish with Congress is through the umbrella organisations, Red Uruguaya and CNS, and it is established in connection with specific bills that the organisations are interested in influencing. The organisations contact first the umbrella organisations in order to apply more pressure for the approval of the bills (interview: Rosana Medina, Carina Bordes, and Magda Batista, 2009). Also, when it is about issues that are more sensitive, such as abortion, women’s organisations establish strategic alliances with organisations that are not part of the women’s movement, particularly organisations from the labour movement, to put extra pressure on the legislators (anonymous interview, 2009). In all cases – though with varied stability – the relationship is mainly with Congresswomen, and only very exceptionally have organisations tried to collaborate with Congressmen because the majority of Congress members are men and the organisations believes that without such collaboration they will not obtain the desired legislation (anonymous interview and interviews: Rosana Medina, Flor Meza, Mabel Simois, Carina Bordes, and Magda Batista, 2009). Interviewees highlight the importance of the women’s caucus in developing legislation on women’s issues. Congresswomen lobby for all women’s issues except abortion (interviews: Ana Maria Nocetti, Flor Meza, Rosana Medina, Estela Garcia, Alicia Canepale, Mabel Simois, Carina Bordes, and Magda Batista 2009).

In addition to direct collaboration, women’s organisations present professional opinions to the Commissions that will discuss the bill or to any commission that requires those opinions (anonymous interview and interview, Mabel Simois, 2009). Further, in some cases
women’s organisations have organised petitions to show Congress that a specific subject has popular support and consequently press Congress for approval of a bill. To give an example, organisations presented a petition to Congress supporting abortion law, which is always a contentious issue (interview, Ana María Nocetti, 2009). Organisations also negotiate the issue but without making the negotiations public. They only negotiate publicly when they know that in that particular case this is the way they will obtain a result (interview, Ana María Nocetti, 2009). Women’s organisations in Uruguay do not establish their members in Congress or in other state positions as part of the mechanisms that influence legislation and policies. However, there are cases of women in state positions that in fact come from the women’s movement, though it is not part of the strategy of the movements or of particular organisations (interview, Estela García, 2009). Nevertheless, interviewees acknowledge a better relationship with those women that were part of the women’s organisations, a closeness that allows them to bring their demands directly to a particular woman in an informal way. This is for example the case with the director of the INM, Carmen Veramendi (interviews: Ana Maria Nocetti, Mabel Simois, Rosana Medina, Carina Bordes, and Magda Batista, 2009).

4. Conclusion

This paper aimed at laying out the relevant characteristics of the women’s movement in the Southern Cone of Latin America, specifically in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay. The characteristics that were taking into account for this analysis were: firstly, those that define a women’s movement as such, namely membership, leadership and areas of interest; secondly, those regarding the size of the organisations; and thirdly, those that refer to the collaboration between women’s organisations with each other and with state institutions. The second and third group of characteristics are relevant to determine the level of influence that the women’s movement in these countries may have. The analysis was conducted per country, in order to identify similarities and differences between the women’s movement in each of them.

Regarding the first two characteristics in analysis, the almost exclusively female membership and leadership of the organisations in the four countries of this research follow an international pattern that confirms with no doubt the definition that Beckwith (2007, 313) gives. On the other hand, in terms of size of the organisations part of the women’s movements, it is possible to observe that in the four cases women’s organisations have some problem to access resources, and they need to get support from volunteers. In all the cases interviewees suggested that the movements were stronger just after the dictatorships. Nevertheless, there are some differences to highlight, such as that in two of the cases, Argentina and Uruguay, the list of women’s organisations is more reduced, as well as their paid personnel, though with some important exceptions. In these cases the strength of the movement comes from the network these organisations establish, which will be further commented when I analyse the alliances between the organisations. In opposition, I can suggest that there is a kind of professionalization in the case of Chile and especially in the case of Brazil. In these cases there is a longer list of identifiable organisations and they have a larger number of staff. In the case of Brazil also they establish permanent links, which strengthen the women’s movement in that country.

There are also many similarities about the areas of interest of the women’s movements in the four countries. In fact, in all of them women’s organisations identify at least three main areas of their interest; one more general that they or me have classify as women’s rights; and two more concrete that refer to violence against women and sexual and reproductive
rights. On the last topic, the most important issue is the legalisation of abortion. This focus is transversal and quite similar to all my cases. Differences arise in terms of the diversity of the rest of the areas of interest of women’s organisations, where Brazil appears as the case with more diversity of issues. However, even more relevant than the diversity of the areas of interest of the women’s organisations is the areas where they manage to agree and collaborate with each other, making the topics part of a demand of a whole movement and not only part of a demand of a specific organisation, which is part of the analysis that follows.

Following with my argument about the relevance of establishing links between women’s organisations to bring their demands to the government, I found that in the four countries under analysis there is constant collaboration between women’s organisations around the issue of violence against women. This topic is relevant for all the organisations and even in the case that this is not their main area of interest, they mobilise as part of the movement. In all the countries, though not so strongly, and with some disagreements about the key issue of abortion, organisations mobilise together regarding sexual and reproductive rights. In some countries, like Chile, organisations have not managed to mobilise as a movement beyond these two topics, while in others, like Brazil and Argentina, organisations have understood the need of collaboration and they either establish alliances around specific demands, that have included several topics, or they generate constant networks to debate the topics that are relevant and the strategies they use to put them on the public agenda. In order to collaborate, women’s organisations have faced several obstacles. The most common is the lack of resources, and the second is some distrust among them coming from the beginning of the democratic period or from the different views that they hold. Finally, since in some countries the organisations understand that they require more strength to push for their agendas, they have built alliances with other organisations, among which the most common are civil society organisations and secondly human right organisations. However, they have also built alliances with labour movement, grassroot organisations and institutions of other spheres of the society, such as universities and tribunals.

Finally, the last aspect that I analysed was the mechanism that women’s organisations use to influence policies. This was specifically analyse for DVAW, but in all the cases organisations recognise to use mainly the same mechanisms for other issues. In particular, the analysis showed that in the four countries women’s organisations interact with the WPA. However, in the two cases with a WPA of high status, Brazil and Chile, women’s organisations interact with the WPA both when they want to influence policies and when they want to influence legislation, whereas in those countries with a WPA of low status, Argentina and Uruguay, the organisations interact less with the WPA and they do not do so when they want to influence legislation. Consequently, WPAs are always an access point to the political sphere for women’s movements, but women’s organisations require other executive power institutions to support their demands, especially when the WPA does not have a high status within the executive power. The analysis also showed that the origin of the WPA’s leader and mainly her view of women’s issues affect the quality of the relationship that women’s organisations can establish with the institution. The same holds for the staff of the WPA, although their influence on the quality of the relationship between organisations and WPAs is less significant. Nevertheless, although women’s organisations recognise that the quality of the relationship with the WPA improves when members of the movement are taken up in the leadership structure, or become part of the staff of the WPA, in none of the countries of this research did the women’s organisations have an insider strategy either in relation to WPA or Congress. Finally, women’s
organisations in each of the countries interact with ministries and other political institutions for two main reasons: first, that the WPAs do not have enough power and women’s organisations search for institutions that are able to develop and implement the relevant measures and policies; second, that these political institutions deal with the specific areas that women’s organisations want to influence, for example education and health.

In women’s organisations’ interactions with Congress women legislators are their main allies. In the four cases women’s organisations contact Congresswomen to suggest a bill and to influence a bill that is already in development. In three of the cases, Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, women’s organisations identify specific Congresswomen who help them to access the legislation process, which supports the literature that claims that the roles of critical actors are more relevant than the role of critical mass. In all the cases women’s organisations recognise that Congresswomen in general support bills regarding violence against women, but they are divided on other issues like abortion. In addition, in the four cases in analysis, women’s organisations use quite strongly mechanisms directed towards the society in general, such as public campaigns and publications in the media, both to make population aware of women’s rights and to increase their strength in a demand for a specific issue.

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