A Diplomatic Answer To Gender Representation:

A Comparative Study Between Latin American Countries On Female Representation In Leadership Roles In The Foreign Service

Master Thesis
Leiden University - Faculty of Governance and Global Affairs
Master Public Administration – Public Management and Leadership

Date: 17th of August 2020
The Hague

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Preface

I would very much like to thank my supervisor, who did an excellent job guiding me through this strenuous process, with clear indications, who helped me keep track and continue writing. I also would like to thank all interviewees for their time, preparation, and input to bring this project to fruition. Likewise, I would like to thank all those close to me, family and friends in particular who have dedicated much of their energy, who have been supporting me in their unique manners and who have been rooting for me to finish this project.

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1.   Introduction

Throughout history, women have hardly been present in the public sector organizations that have traditionally only been accessible to high-class males (Woodacre 2013). Consequently, an overrepresentation of men has been the status quo for centuries, especially in positions of leadership or decision-making power. These power constructions have overflowed to other departments and affected their structure, which increases the challenge for women to enter and achieve similar leading positions (Schwindt-Bayer 2018). Although gradual changes transpired over time, women are still far from being equally represented on the highest level in the public sector (Carey and Dickinson 2015). Having more women in both internal and external politics makes the government more receptive to issues of interest to most women (Paxton, Kunovich et al. 2007) e.g., family arrangements, (sexual) discrimination, violence, and persistent wage gaps. Moreover, a government that actively acts upon the needs of the population and includes minorities is perceived as a more legitimate institution and tends to generate more trust amongst the public (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) since the population deems itself more represented. Also, it is undeniable that government agencies and policies have a significant impact on guiding gender processes and regulating women's lives, both private and professional (Connell 2006). Although times are changing and large developments have taken place since the 1980s, there is still a long road ahead to achieve gender parity worldwide (Lorber 2001, Cornwall and Rivas 2015).

The relevance of equal representation is found in the grown recognition of the benefits that an egalitarian society has to offer e.g., inclusiveness and representation in various fields (Norris and Inglehart 2001). Its positive influence on decision-making outcomes and its stimulus to empower women on multiple levels in organizations and governmental agencies has pushed governments to be more active and inclusive on this topic (OECD 2016). The importance of establishing an equilibrium between genders in the public sector, especially in senior or high positions, serves equal opportunities and balanced representation for society at large: "(..) *achieving inclusive and representative policy outcomes, trust in government, and the responsiveness of public service delivery depend on policy decisions that integrate the perspectives of both men and women*" (OECD 2016, p3). As the UN's fifth goal of the Sustainable Development Goals, gender equality is part of the political agenda in many countries. It is salient to combat a multitude of issues related to discrimination and violation against women and to ensure equal opportunities for them in all sectors (UNDP 2019, p147-168). Therefore, since 1997 the UN (2002) considers it necessary to "mainstream the gender perspective" to achieve gender equality and stimulate continuous

development on this item, globally and in all institutions at every level (UN 2002). Nevertheless, the pace of progress highly varies and behaves differently depending on the region.

An exciting example is Latin America which has currently one of the highest numbers of female participation in parliaments (IPU 2019), despite societies typically ruled by men and the fact that this region is considered by sociologists as '*machista'* or patriarchal (Melhuus and Stølen 1996, Beattie 2002, Gutmann 2006). This perception alters the way of viewing traditional, deep-rooted gender roles of men and women in a specific way within the Latino culture shared in the whole region. Regardless of this development, the region likewise struggles with a high gender discrepancy on multiple levels, amongst others, in the public sector. Consequently, a nation's internal and external representation is affected by gender balance on the highest decision-making levels. With primarily male leaders and the view of men having the upper hand in terms of decision-making embedded in their origins, the realm of diplomacy has followed this line (McCarthy and Southern 2017). Not surprisingly, the world of diplomats is considered 'a man's world' (Neumann 2008). Although women's presence in the diplomatic sector has advanced increasingly over time, the Foreign Service still holds disproportionally high ratios of male ambassadors versus low ratios of their female ambassadors evident (Cassidy 2017, Aggestam and Towns 2019). Latin America follows the same line: female ambassadors are overall sparsely distributed in this region. Most research in the field of gender equality focuses on the global North, i.e., USA, European countries, Australia (Inglehart, Norris et al. 2003), leaving much space to cover in Latin America in terms of gender research.

Elements that influence inequality in leadership positions worldwide and therefore affect the Latin American region vary widely from socio-economic, political to structural factors such as levels of economic growth, female participation on the labor market and women in decision-making bodies, which can help to explain a country's development on gender equality (Paxton, Kunovich et al. 2007, Klasen and Lamanna 2009, Cipollone, Patacchini et al. 2014). These factors are widely researched; however, research on cultural factors that underlie these gender inequalities is still lacking (Norris and Inglehart 2001), e.g., societal and organizational culture. Societal opinions display cultural influences and values about the role of women and men, subsequently impacting or (unconsciously) maintaining the status quo, with institutions reflecting these cultural beliefs within their organizations (Lewis 1997). So far, little has been investigated on the effects of cultural factors on women's representation in leadership positions (Kenworthy and Malami 1999, Makama 2013) and even less in the diplomatic sector (Scott and Rexford 1997, Aggestam and Towns

2019). Therefore, to address the shortcomings in current research, the following research question is proposed:

What cultural factors explain the representation of women in leadership positions in diplomacy in Latin America?

To answer this research question, several cultural factors that may influence the appointment of a female ambassador are investigated through an exploratory research approach that draws on qualitative data from interviews and their analysis, supported by secondary sources. Two propositions guide this process that helps determine which level these cultural factors interact: organizational or societal. Therefore, two Latin American countries are explored that differ in their representation of women in leadership positions in the Foreign Service but score similarly on structural factors, women in ministerial positions and GDP per capita, which are kept constant throughout this research. Through qualitative interviews with embassy officials, different cultural factors are identified. A comparative analysis is conducted to determine how these interact with the different levels of female participation in the Foreign Service as ambassadors. Based on this analysis's outcome, this thesis offers potential recommendations for gender equality improvements within the diplomatic world.

1.1   Relevance

Academic relevance

Although scholarship has explored women representation in leadership positions in different settings (Denmark 1993, Terjesen and Singh 2008, Eagly and Chin 2010, Bullough, Kroeck et al. 2012), the locus lays in general on Western World countries. In this context, Latin America has been little explored. Latin America provides a relevant context due to the increasing number of women participating in the public sector (Inglehart, Norris et al. 2003, ECLAC 2016). This comparative study contributes to the literature gaps since little research has been conducted on gender representation in diplomacy and in this geographic region. The literature mainly focuses on the Western World, which provides a somewhat obstructed view on the subject as such. By concentrating on Latin America as a whole and comparing two countries, Chile and Costa Rica, this study provides scope on an underexposed part in the currently existing literature of gender equality in diplomacy.

Furthermore, the field of diplomacy in relation to gender representation has not received much attention from scholars. By researching the diplomatic field, this thesis focuses on a specific elitist

group that is more difficult to approach. Moreover, the Foreign Service is an exciting sector that behaves differently and is likely to have other ongoing processes than many other sectors. The realm of diplomats is relatively closed to the public, making it more challenging to investigate; thus, fewer studies have been conducted in this field. Like many public servants in top-level positions, ambassadors have a role with significant authority and high responsibility dealing with confidential matters, (inter-)governmental affairs, and continually being in the public eye. For research in political sciences, interviews with professionals in powerful positions or experts are relevant, since they can provide contextual knowledge of their (working)field or organization (Meuser and Nagel 2009). Information on diplomacy obtained through qualitative research, particularly expert interviews, is likewise scarce. Much of the existing research is focused on socio-economic factors, yet less on cultural ones, leaving sufficient gaps to fill. By concentrating on this particular sector and investigating cultural and political factors through qualitative research, this study will fill in some of these gaps.

In addition to the limited research on diplomacy in Latin America, this investigation also emphasizes cultural factors less frequently investigated. The primary type of investigation done regarding these themes is based on statistics and structural factors, such as labor market participation of women and the number of women in ministerial positions (Krook and O'Brien 2012). Cultural factors are less accounted for within the field of research on gender equality and diplomacy, let alone within a Latin American context. Therefore, the added value of this study is not only to close some gaps within the literature on gender equality and diplomacy in Latin America, to cast a light on underlying (social) mechanisms that account for different outcomes in female representation in similar cases. By paying more attention to these cultural factors or mechanisms and exploring whether explanatory power attributed to them, this research provides a different approach for future research on attaining gender parity in high positions in the public sector.

Methodologically this study also contributes to gender equality literature. The research is mostly done through large-N studies or within-case studies, focusing on the world or a specific country. Conducting comparative research between two countries, one in Central America and the other in South America, fills in the gap caused by the absence of comparative small-N research in this field of study.

The empirical evidence generated through this study and its findings can provide practical contributions for public administration and spark new starting points for further research on underlying cultural factors affecting gender representation in the public sector.

Practical relevance

This research's social salience is found in the importance of equal representation in the public field, supported by the theory of representative bureaucracy. The idea of this theory is that public officers represent the population in such a way that the cultural values, views, and backgrounds of that population reflected and represented in everyday decision- and policymaking, including the variety amongst groups and minorities (Sowa and Selden 2003). Hence, equal distribution and inclusion of generally underrepresented groups reflect the general population's diversity. This research acknowledges and underlines the importance of the whole spectrum of representative bureaucracy; however, is focused on the gender gap. Women possess varying abilities, different characteristics, and competencies from men, therefore their (work) approaches affect outcomes differently, highlighting the indispensability of equal representation (Weikart, Chen et al. 2006, Schwindt-Bayer 2018). Therefore, this research contributes to the fortification of the salience of gender equality in the public sector in general. The focus on the diplomatic field research can help defy the status quo within its field and in other parts of the public sector that are still highly male-dominated. Also, the study can also offer practical points of focus for policymakers and suggestions for improvement regarding gender equality in the public sector.

1.2   Thesis structure

The research consists of six main chapters. The following chapter will provide a theoretical framework that delves into current literature on gender and leadership, discusses structural and cultural factors, and presents propositions aligned with the research question. In the third chapter, the context of Latin America is briefly outlined, giving an overview of several structural factors. In the fourth chapter, the study's methodology is discussed, together with the case selection, limitations of the research and the investigation process. In the fifth chapter, a comparison between both case studies is made, followed by the analysis of empirical findings. The last chapter provides a discussion and conclusions, followed by recommendations for further research.

2.   Theoretical framework

This chapter lays the theoretical groundwork to support the salience of this empirical research by presenting the current literature on gender equality with linkages to the public sector. First, I will present a literature review on the intersection of gender equality and leadership theories in the public sector. Second, I explain the domain of diplomacy and its relationship to gender. Third, I will outline much investigated structural factors that impact female representation in leadership positions and the less researched cultural factors. I will derive my propositions from the latter. Finally, I will summarize this theoretical body by presenting a conceptual model.

In short, this investigation's outlook is set on the intersection of diplomacy and female representation on the highest level within the context of Latin America, aiming at exploring the literature gap – See Figure 1.
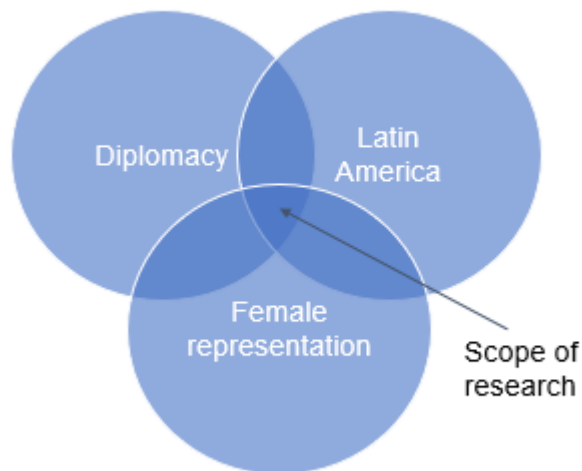
Fig. 1 Scope of research: Female representation in top leadership positions in Latin American diplomacy

2.1   Literature review – gender and leadership in the public sector

In the extensive literature on leadership, scholars have excluded women and their potential role as leaders for a significant amount of time until the end of the 20th century (Denmark 1993). Over the years, researchers have been investigating theories on leadership in relationship with gender equality. Principal explanations for the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions refer to glass metaphors, the role of stereotypes, and the independent role of male to female ratios in an organization. It is relevant to consider these theories since they help clarify factors that influence female representation on top levels or in powerful positions. However, they insufficiently

address the sector of diplomacy, inadequately include cultural factors, and do not provide satisfactory explanations for the difference between the female representation of top-level diplomats in the region of Latin America.

Glass metaphors

Social scientists have often investigated the relation between '*glass metaphors'* e.g., glass ceiling, glass cliff, and women pursuing or in leadership positions (Cotter, Hermsen et al. 2001, Nutley and Mudd 2005, Ryan and Haslam 2005, Jensen 2008, Bruckmüller and Branscombe 2010, Smith and Monaghan 2013). These invisible yet existing and persistent hurdles that hinder women's growth or present higher risks for females, are often applied to explain the disbalance of female representation at certain top-levels. E.g., looking at the glass cliff Fisk and Overton (2019) examined how women's ambitions are altered by higher gender-related penalties for women in relation to failure in these positions. When comparing the experiences of male and female executives, Lyness and Thompson (1997) indicated that women encounter more hardship to reach those positions and are likely to be confronted with a second ceiling *if* breaking the first one. Also, other scholars like Bruckmüller (2014) stressed the importance of including women's experiences in high positions, and not only the amount of women (above the glass ceiling), as this provides a more comprehensive image of other challenges faced by women (Bruckmüller, Ryan et al. 2014).

Although these metaphors help to visualize better and map gender representation, this approach has also received criticism. Scholars like Connell (2006) argued that these theories lack specific explanations due to how the concept 'gender' and the metaphors themselves are viewed. The approach on this concept as assumed by 'glass theories', is that it is rigid and set in stone. Instead, various scholars have argued that gender is a flexible, social construct, or system that can change over time and place (Crawford 2003, p1413-1418, Risman 2004, Connell 2006). Moreover, Connell (2006) tackles another theoretical assumption by debating the entanglement of gender with governmental bodies, in contrast to gender, as an independent concept. The public sector has a long-standing history of inequality, making it even easier for an already disadvantaged group like women to be susceptible to unfair treatment (Conley, Kerfoot et al. 2011). Although research on glass metaphors helps to shed light through an organizational lens on women appointed to top positions, it often focuses on organizational factors rather than cultural factors that likewise can impact female representation on the highest level.

Gender stereotypes

Another recurring theme in the literature on gender are social constructs, which harbor a great variety of factors that impact women in their pursuit of reaching top-positions, e.g., stereotypes, gendered traits and cultural role assignments (Crawford 2003, Risman 2004). The influence of stereotypes on masculinity and femininity affects cultural norms around sex distinctions, such as gender, which discusses an interpretation and significance of those distinctions (Walker and Cook 1998); therefore the word 'gender' is operated in this thesis.

Furthermore, the literature frequently addresses the social outlook on gender and prevailing stereotypes (Eagly and Johnson 1990, Powell, Butterfield et al. 2002, Hoyt 2005, Eagly and Carli 2012). Certain social constructs or beliefs on gender form gendered stereotypes, explained with gender status beliefs: "*shared cultural schemas about the status position in society of groups (..) based on gender (..)*" (Ridgeway 2001, p637). She argues that these schemas impact processes through which someone promotes. Other scholars like Correll (2004) take on an individualistic approach and link how these gender beliefs affect personal career choices, thus influencing women's leadership ambitions and professional trajectory. The individual level and the contextual factors that positively or negatively affect women to be appointed have been overlooked continuously (Cassidy 2012). Moreover, an individualistic approach must consider the social context in which a woman finds herself. Within this context, certain expectations on gender, such as gendered traits, are voiced (England and Browne 1992, as paraphrased in Risman 2004, p430). For example, women must prove themselves more, are more severely reprimanded, or face harder consequences for errors, and additional roles are attributed to their positions in comparison to men (Nutley and Mudd 2005). Kanter presents a variety of roles assigned to women (i.e., iron maiden, mother, seductress, or pet), that pushes females in a pre-set position that poses increased challenges to them, compared to their male colleagues (Kanter 1977, p981-984). While the literature on gender stereotypes provides a good understanding of cultural elements affecting the perception of women as leaders, various fields in the public sector have not been explored extensively, including the diplomatic sector. Research in policy fields typically regarded as masculine such as the Foreign Service (Kahn 1993, Sanbonmatsu 2002), seems relevant to gain more knowledge about the underlying cultural factors at play.

The power of numbers

A different approach from the previous are skewed proportions that greatly affect the women's attitude as a minority (Kanter 1977). Depending on the balance within an organization where men

and women are present, women can be perceived as an absolute minority or *tokens*. A higher number of women changes the proportions in an organization from a minority, to potential subgroup and from there to a majority and dominant group. Three aspects linked with these minorities are *assimilation* (i.e., women pushed to confirm stereotypes or pre-set bias on female sex); *polarization* (i.e., characteristics of women are inflated to emphasize differences between groups), and *visibility* (i.e., high exposure of women within a group of men) (Kanter 1977). These reactions from female tokens are displayed towards the overrepresented male group.

In the case of *assimilation*, prejudice pushes women to meet existing ideas about their roles, which is often deformed to match generalized perceptions of women. This means that they are frequently perceived as having a lesser level of status than men (e.g., female doctor seen as a nurse vs. male nurse seen as a doctor) and as previously mentioned, are stuck with stereotypical female roles assigned by men (Kanter, 1977; Scott and Rexford, 1997). Reactions to these persistent assumptions are e.g., acceptation of those assigned roles and incorrect perception of a woman's status level. *Polarization* causes women to be treated as an outsider and therefore stresses differences between them and the predominant masculine culture and its characteristics. This can also result in women ultimately adopting the masculine view or perceiving themselves as an exception to their sex (Kanter, 1977, p.979). Women's reactions are either to participate in this masculine behavior or to be excluded through isolation by the male group. *Visibility* entails a greater pressure on women to perform since they are very noticeable among a group of men. This results in the perception that a woman represents both herself and females in general and is assessed accordingly by men. Women's reaction to this is by minimizing attention e.g., by shying away from public gatherings or by proving her capacities by overachieving (Kanter 1977, p173-175). Different from the former, Murray (2014) argues that the focus on the lack of women's presence, thus portraying them as minorities, should be framed in the light of men's overrepresentation. As explained by Cohen and Swim (1995) the gender ratio of an organization also shapes career choices and recruitment for male-dominated occupations.

Although numbers play an important part in shaping women's role and their perception in an organization, they do not necessarily explain the factors that positively or negatively impact the ratios. As an example, the implementations of quotas merely focus on the end results, ratio of women, rather than the underlying structural causes affecting these ratios.

2.2   The Foreign Service

Research on the Foreign Service or in the diplomatic field is sparse and even more limited when it comes to gender equality in this elitist, male-dominated field (Neumann 2008). Even though there have always been high ranking female diplomats, this was more an exception to the rule and mainly known through studies partaking in Europe or in the USA. Also, women were considered inferior to men and, therefore deemed not valuable enough to be considered or included by historians (McCarthy and Southern 2017). This little available information and limited geographical scope resulted in a distorted portrait of those women in diplomacy, and thus, contributed to the conservation of the Foreign Service's masculine image (Cassidy 2017). Nevertheless, organizations started to change more with women as a much-needed workforce, as world wars pushed the need for women to work a 'men's' job (Bullough, Kroeck et al. 2012, p399; Rubery 2013; McKenzie, 2017, p35).

Although Calkin (1978) started the theoretical discussion of what position women took up in Foreign Affairs of the North American society, the diplomatic sector has been lingering in terms of scholarship on gender (Calkin 1978, Neumann 2008, Aggestam and Towns 2019). The currently available literature discusses case studies predominantly in the global North within a specific time frame or era, subsequently leaving out e.g., comparative studies and other parts of the world (Aggestam and Towns, 2019, p16). As mentioned earlier, scholars have argued that even though institutional factors help women to gain more territory as leaders, other variables play a part as well in the slow development of women in leadership positions. Often heard are existing female representation (Smith and Monaghan, 2013), the degree of the possibility of failure (Bruckmüller and Branscombe 2010), and the societal status quo that maintains a certain image of women. New dimensions ought to be explored to explain and understand the low representation of highly positioned females in the Foreign Service. Aggestam and Towns (2019) suggested a new research agenda for this field, proposing to generate data from other eras and geographic locations to place obtained data in different contexts for comparison.

Leadership in diplomacy

Leadership positions in diplomacy indicate a high or senior position where one has a substantial influence on decision-making, status, and manages other officers. In the diplomatic field, this is the position of Minister-Counselor, General Consul, or Ambassador. The latter holds the highest executive power within an embassy; therefore, I mainly consider the position of ambassador for research purposes when referring to leadership positions. An ambassador represents his or her country's interests on behalf of their country abroad, taking the leader's role before diplomatic

assignments abroad. Every position concerning ambassadorship is one of influence and status (Krook and O'Brien, 2011, p14). There are two types of ambassadors to be identified: career diplomats and diplomats by political assignment. Whereas both need to comply with specific requirements and education, career diplomats have studied and completed diplomatic training before working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Diplomats by political appointment have not necessarily previously followed this diplomatic training but are appointed due to political trust. It is not uncommon that when new governments take office, diplomats by political appointment are replaced.

2.3   Factors affecting women in leadership positions in diplomacy

The gendered construction of patriarchal society is at the core of shaping gender inequality (Baumgartner, Buckley et al. 1975) in societal culture as well as in several public spheres such as law, health, politics, and economics (Yllö 1984). In these public areas there are structural factors in effect that are essential or even a prerequisite for the development of gender equality, e.g., female participation on the labor market, education, economic growth, women in parliament, national policies on families, making leeway for educated and independent women (Cipollone, Patacchini et al. 2014). These factors are often addressed in gender studies (Bericat 2011) since they greatly impact women's ability to achieve top leadership positions like ambassadors in the case of the diplomatic sector.

However, structural factors also interact with and are impacted by different cultural factors (Norris and Inglehart 2001). Societal views, together with popular opinions on men's and women's roles, function as a causal agent that shapes the political agenda on women (Thomas, 1994 referred to in Kenney, 1996), ultimately influencing women in top levels professions. These societal elements are created, preserved, or influenced by various aspects in a country's society (e.g., values, beliefs, traditions), which in turn are reflected in public spheres. In addition, organizational culture also acts its part when focusing on a specific organization like the Foreign Service since a male-dominated field displays distinct characteristics and affects women as minority groups differently (Kanter 1977).

While societal and organizational culture affect women's roles, the presence of structural factors is a precondition to investigate how these cultural aspects interact with them. Therefore, a set of structural factors on the country-level is presented that may impact female representation in high positions in diplomacy. To explore what cultural effects affect women's representation in leadership positions, ceteris paribus, cultural factors are examined to identify their impact on this

representation. Hence, cultural factors on both country level (societal) and organizational level (Foreign Service) are presented.

2.3.1 Structural factors

The possibilities for the empowerment of women are found in multiple interacting and mutually reinforcing factors (Unesco 2014). Health and legal dimensions are mentioned; however, there is a robust mutual cohesion between economic and public policies. In general, countries with a high GDP per capita highly correlate with a high labor market participation (WEF 2018). Economic factors are mutually correlated with one another, as is the case with public policies. To better interpret the effect of cultural factors, structural factors must be included in this research and maintained stable. The most relevant structural factors for this investigation are addressed since their impact on and interaction with cultural factors cannot be omitted. Therefore, it affects the cultural explanation that is sought after in this investigation on women's representation as leaders in diplomacy. Therefore, I will examine the level of economic growth by GDP per capita, female labor market participation, national family policies, and women in political positions.

Economic growth: GDP per capita

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita is a standard indicator for a state's economic growth and affects the overall development of other areas, e.g., health and education, which improves when the GDP increases. Various scholars (Dollar and Gatti 1999, Klasen 2002, Klasen and Lamanna 2009) have argued that gender inequality and (access to) education intertwines with economic growth: it impacts the GDP level, whereas an increased level of GDP positively affects the level of education (OECD 2012). Since historically a girl's position in education has been subordinate to a boy's one (Rietveld-Van Wingerden 2005), increased participation in education presumes an increased number of females taking part. Unpaid work that, in general, befalls unto women (e.g., caregiving or caretaking functions and household) has been considered more intensive and has helped raise attention to the importance of women's decision-making power in economic policies. In addition, when comparing multiple gender equality indices[1], an economic dimension is always included; to establish a certain social level, such economic factors need to remain stable (Bericat 2011). An increase of females receiving higher levels of education can positively produce a domino-effect on several levels. On a societal scale this can increase the women's independence, since one is more self-sufficient, therefore less dependent on income of

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[1] Gender-related Development Index; Gender Equity Index; African Gender Status Index; Gender Gap Index; Gender Equality Index in Mexican States; European Union Equality Index; Global Gender Gap Index

a partner as traditionally was common. On an economic scale, it can snowball to increase labor market participation, which provides a larger base for selecting highly educated women who are deemed suitable and better prepared for chief positions in the diplomatic field. From current literature, it becomes evident that an increase of the GDP level can imply an increase in women's status (Forsythe, Korzeniewicz et al. 2000), thus resulting in more women in high positions, both private and public sector. Therefore, I assume that a higher level of GDP per capita increases the number of women striving for and selected for leading roles in the foreign service.

Participation on labor market

Female participation in the labor market has been one of the main indices in research on gender equality, which scholars have focused on so far (Dijkstra 2000). According to the World Bank data (2019, 2020), worldwide women's participation in the (paid) labor market is considerably lower than men's. Social responsibilities often influence women's participation, such as family care. Moreover, their participation highly correlates with education: in comparison to men, when women receive less schooling, their labor market participation is lower and vice versa (Morrison, Raju et al. 2007, p8-13). Following this reasoning, education can help grow female labor market participation, thus creating a heightened female presence in professional settings, which ultimately can reinforce more empowered female leaders in top positions. Therefore, I speculate that an increased level of women's labor market participation heightens the number of women in the diplomatic sector to reach top leadership positions.

Law and national policies on families

The development of family policies is another indicator that is strongly correlated with labor market participation of women (Cipollone, Patacchini et al. 2014). Cipollone et al (2014) found in their research that female labor market participation increased by almost 25-38% through a combination of policy and institutional changes. On average, there is a larger presence of women on the labor market in nations where there are a variety of childcare policies, because these policies are based on the individual. The female individual partaking in the labor market is the contrary to the model of how families organize. With more regulations of childcare are in place, more individuals can participate on the job market, especially women who traditionally have caretaking tasks bestowed upon them. Frequently, nations that employ these policies are among the more developed democracies with a higher GDP (Tzannatos 1999, Cipollone, Patacchini et al. 2014). Consequently, I anticipate that national family policies boost the number of available women for head posts in the Foreign Service.

Women in ministerial positions and parliament

In political systems with a president, as is the case for many countries worldwide, ministerial cabinets arise from the political will of the President elected and their circle of power in decision-making. In this line, it can be argued that the amount of women appointed as ministers of such cabinets depends on variables such as the type of leadership and how the political agenda positions gender equality (ECLAC 2016). In contrast, parliaments constitute the expression of popular opinion from the society and display the diverse political expressions that generate the checks and balances in the political system. In the light of representative bureaucracy theory, it is expected that a balanced parliament i.e., achieved gender parity, can optimally represent the female section of society in high positions. Therefore, I expect that a high number of women on top positions in the parliaments can lead to an increment of highly positioned female leaders in diplomacy.

Although those aforementioned structural factors serve as clear indications when considering gender discrepancies, they provide little explanation for cultural factors, which also can restrain women on their way to the top and can contribute to the gender imbalance on the highest level in the diplomatic field.

2.3.2   Cultural factors

Cultural factors can be divided between a country level (societal culture) and organizational level (organizational culture), making them flexible and subject to change in different (social) contexts. Societal culture regards all elements related to the culture of a country: beliefs, values, traditions, and convictions. Organizational culture refers to the visible and hidden internal culture of an institution like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: social rules, regulations, code of conduct, working atmosphere, social climate, and guidelines. Both organizational and social factors are intertwined in such a way that they influence the other and vice versa (Norris and Inglehart 2001). Since this research deals with the cultural meaning of femininity in leadership positions in a diplomatic context, the effects of cultural factors on both levels is further explored.

Societal culture

Gendered social systems that are designed by and for the male elite harbor other barriers for females in society. Patriarchy is reflected in these systems and therefore defines work roles by gender (Terjesen and Singh 2008, p9). This leads to stereotyping and discrimination e.g., 'think manager, think male' thus creating more challenges for women to reach leadership positions (Schein, Mueller et al. 1996, Ryan, Haslam et al. 2011). Many cultural elements interconnect since

underlying social constructs are often deeply embedded in a social system that they are challenging to expose. Societal culture marks a pattern repeated over time and entrenched in daily behavior, views, opinions, and actions. Therefore, these cultural elements produce and maintain specific social constructions that conversely are sustained, and entangled roles marked with gender. For example, men are perceived as leaders and women as assistants or men as doctors and women as nurses, and therefore, these gendered roles affect women negatively on all levels, as mentioned in West and Zimmerman (1987). The continuation of such dominant cultural beliefs and stereotypes hinders women in their advancement to leadership positions, even more so in masculine fields like diplomacy. Evidently, on a social level prevailing gendered norms resonate into gender roles assigned to females (Risman 2004, p432), e.g., women associated with the nurturing role of mother or family caretaker and men as breadwinners and leaders(Blackstone 2003). When this role division is widely accepted on a societal level, it continues a persistent historical pattern. When the social perception of women's role is that of a mother instead of a leader, the impetus of selecting those women for prestigious top positions is small. In this light, ceteris paribus, I propose the following proposition:

P1: When there is a strong role division between men and women in a national culture, where women carry more responsibility for the family, less women reach leadership positions in the Foreign Service.

Organizational culture

The effects of persistent societal stereotypes reverberate into organizations, affecting their internal culture (Eagly and Karau 2002). Organizational culture plays a key role in shaping and directing internal decision-making and behavior by projecting internal rules, assumptions, standards and characteristics on new entrants, training them to perceive and act according to these (Schein 2010, Longman, Daniels et al. 2018). According to Schein (2010), an organizational culture eventually establishes leadership criteria which are typically gendered. The perception of a leader together with leadership characteristics, e.g., authority and power, are linked to a male leader stereotype, even more in masculine fields, which causes discrimination against women since their gender does not align with the example of a leader (Garcia-Retamero and López-Zafra 2006). Moreover, since diplomacy is historically a male dominated field (Neumann 2008), it can be expected that gendered stereotypes resound even deeper in this sector. Following Kanter (1977) the gender ratios in an organization influence how women are perceived and how this affects their behavior according to their minority status in masculine fields. As mentioned before, some reactions to this are women confirming pre-set biases on females, therefore challenging women

to be seen or considered as leaders. These ratios impact and further shape organizational culture, consequently affecting women's possibilities to attain leadership positions in general (Kanter 1977). Within this reasoning, it can be assumed that this works similarly in the diplomatic sector. Thus, ceteris paribus, I suggest the following proposition:

P2: As the Foreign Service employs more men than women, less women reach leadership positions in the Foreign Service.

2.4 Conceptual model

In the intersective field of female representation, the Foreign Service and Latin America cultural factors will be analyzed to look for clues that may indicate or are responsible for a higher or lower level of representation of women in high positions in the diplomatic field. The structural factors will be maintained constant when investigating cultural factors on two different levels, organizational and societal or country level.
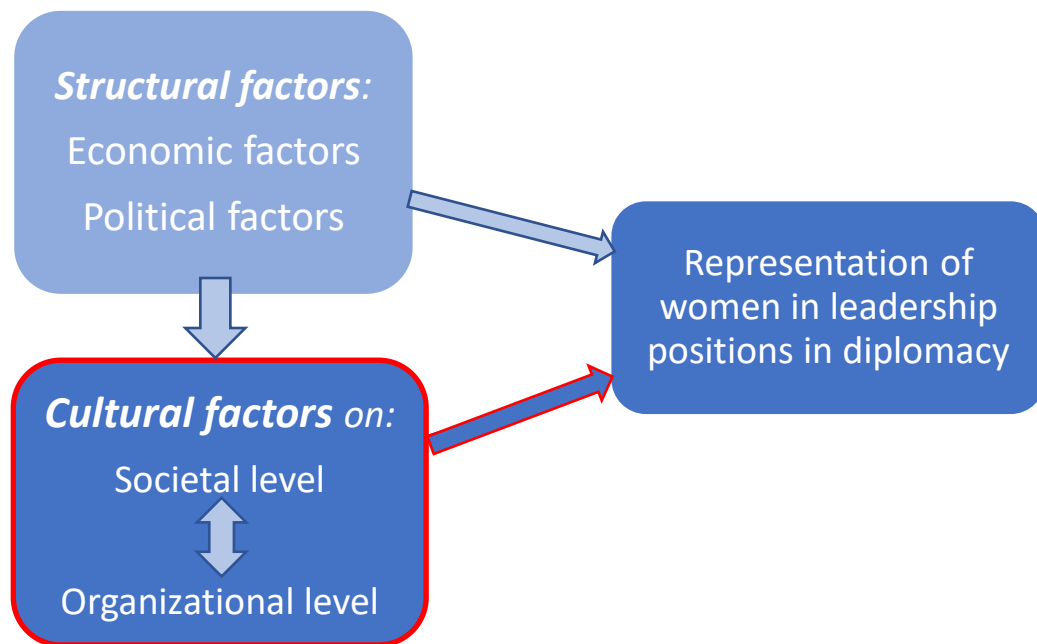
Fig. 2 Conceptual model of research

3. Context of Latin America

This chapter provides a short background description of Latin American culture and gives an overview of how the previously mentioned structural factors that can influence women to reach high leadership positions operate in this region.

3.1 Common denominators of culture

The continent in its entirety has a tumultuous history in political and societal manner. Authoritarian regimes have been more the rule than the exception and democracies have not been common until the late 1970's (Schwindt-Bayer, 2018, p56). An aspect related to this is the high level of corruption that presses its mark on the region. According to the Global Agenda of the World Economic Forum (2014) the key challenges in Latin America is increasing inequality, followed by economic growth and education. Yet with the increase of political stability, interacting factors such as economic growth and labor market participation were also boosted, consequently increasing the attention to gender inequality as well (Vigoya, Fonseca et al. 2003, p28). Though this region has evolved significantly in terms of achieving gender equality, the pace of change is diverse across countries and considerable challenges remain.

Besides this political history, Latin America has a shared male chauvinistic, *machismo* or *macho* culture that predominates in most, if not all, countries. The general established gender role incongruity that is already present in patriarchy worldwide is emphasized, maintained, and fortified by this prevalent *machismo*. All that this culture entails causes for women to be seen or placed in a certain role or position in society, e.g., mother or caretaker.

3.2 Economic development with political lining

The region at large has steadily developed its GDP per capita over time, only to pick up pace after the turn of the century until the worldwide economic crisis in 2008. After this, the average regional GDP has continued to grow, yet has slowly declined in the last years (ECLAC 2020). Whilst countries such as Colombia, Panama, Paraguay, and Peru have had significant economic growth over the last decade, others like Nicaragua and Venezuela have experienced substantial decrease, of which the latter has declined over 50% of its GDP per capita from 2010 onwards (WorldBank 2019). Following the previous example, relationships between economic development, political system, often mainly considering democracy, and corruption in Latin America has received much attention over time (Remmer 1990, Landman 1999, Lagos 2003, Andres and Ramlogan-Dobson 2011) since these occurrences are not uncommon and can be in

part responsible for a decrease in the regional GDP. According to ECLAC's[2] most recent report on gender equality (2019), achieving democracy and fortifying it is one of the cornerstones into realization of greater gender equilibria in this region.

3.3 Law, policies, and gender agenda

Legislation in Latin America has been adjusted over the years to initiate the change for gender balance at all levels, starting with the eradication of publicly discriminating laws against women (ECLAC 2019, p17). Moreover, the establishment of specific departments or entire ministries for the advancement of women in multiple countries, aid to reinforce these plans, albeit with a dissimilar pace. In general, the more common focus on gender issues has extended from private concerns and physical authority (e.g., domestic work, pregnancy, caregiving, and violence) to exercise of power of women i.a. in decision-making bodies (ECLAC 2016, p110-112). It is noticeable, however, that a larger budget for women's improvement aligns with a higher budget for the execution of violence prevention laws. This portrays a main concern of gender equality directed towards gender-based violence, which mainly has been the case for Brazil and Chile. Although most countries have not dedicated a large subsidy to achieving gender equilibria, due to tracking programs i.a. attention to gender equality policies in public spending has increased.

The expanding available statistics on gender and equality have been playing a key role in mapping the differences between genders in all areas and therefore shaping gender agendas (ECLAC 2015, p24-27). Not only the impact of numbers but social awareness has likewise propelled the expansion of gender policies. Worldwide social campaigns such as "#metoo" as well as regional movements like *Las Tesis* have sparked the public voice and were picked up by several governments. Very often gender policies are the combined effort of feminist and women's movements together with governmental bodies in shaping the national as well as regional gender agendas (ECLAC 2016, p27-28).

Other fundamental elements that have been severely shaping the playing field from the 1990s onwards are gender parity laws and quotas in national governments, with Argentina as worldwide frontrunner on quota implementation establishing a quota law in 1991. This was followed by many other countries, making Latin America the region with one of most implemented quota laws in the world thus far (IDEA 2020). It has greatly improved the influx of women in leadership positions,

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[2] CEPAL: *Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe*/ ECLAC: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

although the effects fluctuate depending on numerous factors e.g., type of quota, percentage and level of adherence (Martelotte 2016).

3.4   Female participation in decision-making bodies

Compared to the rest of the world, the continent has accounted for most female head of states and is currently a leading region considering the incrementation of female political participation (IPU 2019). As for 2020, only Bolivia has a female president, albeit interim, although together with Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Panama they account for 11 female presidents thus far (Kouba and Poskocilová 2014, Schwindt-Bayer 2018). Besides this number of female leaders, women in Bolivia, Cuba, and Mexico have occupied at least half of the seats in parliament while others e.g., Costa Rica and Nicaragua almost reached parity in parliament. Although gender disparities are widespread in the region, almost 31% of women occupy seats in parliament in Latin America's legislative congresses, notwithstanding, its progress behaves differently across the region. High numbers of female parliamentarians (>40%) are displayed in e.g., Bolivia and Costa Rica, whereas seven countries like Brazil and Paraguay account for the lowest (<20%) in the region (WorldBank 2018). In addition, at least eight countries have deviated towards a regimen of parity between 2008 and 2014: Bolivia; Costa Rica (achieved in 2018); Ecuador; Mexico.

Regarding the portfolios of female ministers, the overall tendency of women holding gender stereotyped portfolios, e.g., social affairs, remains (Schwindt-Bayer 2018, p9-12, 245-252). Women continue to have a low participation rate in the ministry of Foreign Affairs, with 2 women out of 18 ministers in all countries in 2019. A similar trend is seen in the appointment of female ambassadors – See Graph 1 in the next chapter.

3.5   Labor market participation of women

Although major progress has been made female labor market participation over the last three decades, it still needs great advances to close the gender disparity in labor market participation. (ILO 2019). In 1990, somewhat over 40% of the female population[3] was active on the paid labor market whereas almost 52% in 2019, translating to around 5 out of 10 women currently participating in paid labor. Compared to men, this is almost 8 out of 10 with 76% partaking in the paid labor market in 2019 (WorldBank 2019). Nevertheless, Peru has currently the highest number of female participants, accounting for more than 70% of the female population active in comparison to 85% of the male population. This Peruvian example provides a stark contrast to

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[3] All females of 15+ years that are economically active

other examples like the Guatemalan female population of which less than 40% is active on the paid labor market, the lowest in Latin America. The rate of male participants on the labor market, however, is currently the highest in the region with over 86% (WorldBank 2019).

3.6   Social view on women's role in society

The sociocultural projections on Latinas' role in society affect females from an early age and (negatively) impact their development in society. Certain cultural perceptions combined with predominant *machismo* snowballs into gendered expectations, resulting e.g., access or integration to the labor market and attainment of leadership positions by views on or imposed gender roles.

According to Latinobarómetro[4], one of the main difficulties that women face to integrate into the labor market is due to the difficulty to attend the children, closely followed by businessmen not hiring women with children (2015). When inquiring on how much one (strongly) agrees or disagrees with women only working when the couple does not earn enough, mainly Central American countries agreed on to this (35%-53%), whereas a larger group (strongly) disagreed, setting the regional average on 40% . The majority in the region agreed (57%) on whether half of members of parliament should be female, although 20% to 30% did not. Another survey addressed whether a gender mixed team has better, worse, or equal results compared to an all-men team, resulting in a total score of 55% versus 36% of the respondents stating it would produce equal results (Latinobarómetro 2017, Latinobarómetro 2018). The responses reflect i.a. the vision on gender roles in this part of the world and can help to explain traditional female roles. According to the gender observatory of ECLAC, household and caretaking chores still mostly befall upon women, around 80%, in Latin America on average. Argentina, Chile, and Mexico display the largest disparity with women working over 40 h/w on unpaid household in comparison to men with less than 20 h/w (ECLAC 2020). work. Following this source, this disbalance will continue to negatively impact women's development in society (ECLAC 2016, p51-60). In this light, True gender equality can only be reached when males take up half of the domestic and caring tasks according to Promundo (2020), a worldwide organization originated in Brazil for advancing gender equality by focusing on male's participation in partnerships with others.

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[4] Latinobarómetro Corporation is responsible for carrying out Latinobarómetro, an annual public opinion survey that involves some 20,000 interviews in 18 Latin American countries, representing more than 600 million people. It observes the development of democracies, economies, and societies, using indicators of attitude, opinion, and behavior.

4.   Methodology

This chapter describes the research methodology used for this investigation. The empirical research to investigate the previously mentioned propositions is conducted as follows. First, the selected research design and justification of the case selection are explained together with the selected unit of analysis and units of observation. Second, the methods underlying the process of data collection are described. Third, the operationalization of the tested variables (i.e., coding scheme and conceptual model) to classify the propositions are presented. Lastly, reliability of the research in terms of internal and external validity are evaluated.

4.1   Research design and justification of case selection

The empirical research to investigate the roles of cultural factors on the representation of high-positioned women in diplomacy draws on an exploratory approach. The applied research design for this is a most similar system design (MSSD II) which holds similar cases which yet differ in outcome. Cases that scored similar on two structural variables of interest were selected – See chapter 2. The selected structural variables to determine the case selection are the percentage of women appointed in ministerial positions and the levels of GDP per capita. Two countries in the region, namely Costa Rica and Chile, perform similarly in these variables. However, their numbers regarding appointed women in high leadership positions, translating to ambassadors, in the diplomatic sector contrast significantly – See Graph 1.

Regarding the percentage of women in ministerial positions, Costa Rica has reached gender parity with 50% of female ministers, while Chile reaches up to 47% (Chile 2019, Rica 2019). Concerning the levels of GDP per capita, Costa Rica ranks as 4th highest in all Latin American countries considered in this research (21) with a GDP over 12,000, whereas Chile obtains the 3nd place with almost 15,000 (WorldBank 2019). Nevertheless, the number of appointed women as ambassadors differs significantly: On the one hand, Costa Rica has a relatively high percentage (40%)[5] of women in these positions, while Chile present low numbers (13%)[6] in this subject – See table 3. Thus, no selected variable shared between these countries can explain the difference in outcome. Following Toshkov (2016), when this situation is present it is suitable to use an inductive logic and to introduce a possible explanatory variable that may account for the difference in

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[5] At the time of measurement in October 2019 from the official websites of the Costa Rican embassies and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
[6] At the time of measurement in October 2019 from the official websites of Chilean's embassies and Ministry of Foreign Affairs

outcomes between the cases. For this purpose, a MSSD II will be conducted for this research. This follows an inductive approach to uncover possible non-shared variable(s) responsible for the different outcome of both cases. This approach also paves the way to establishing new propositions and gives direction for further research. As explained by Toshkov, this design uses a bottom-up, propositions-generating approach to address such empirical research puzzle (Toshkov 2016, p266-269).

Graph 1. The ratio of female to male ambassadors in Latin America & Caribbean (2019)
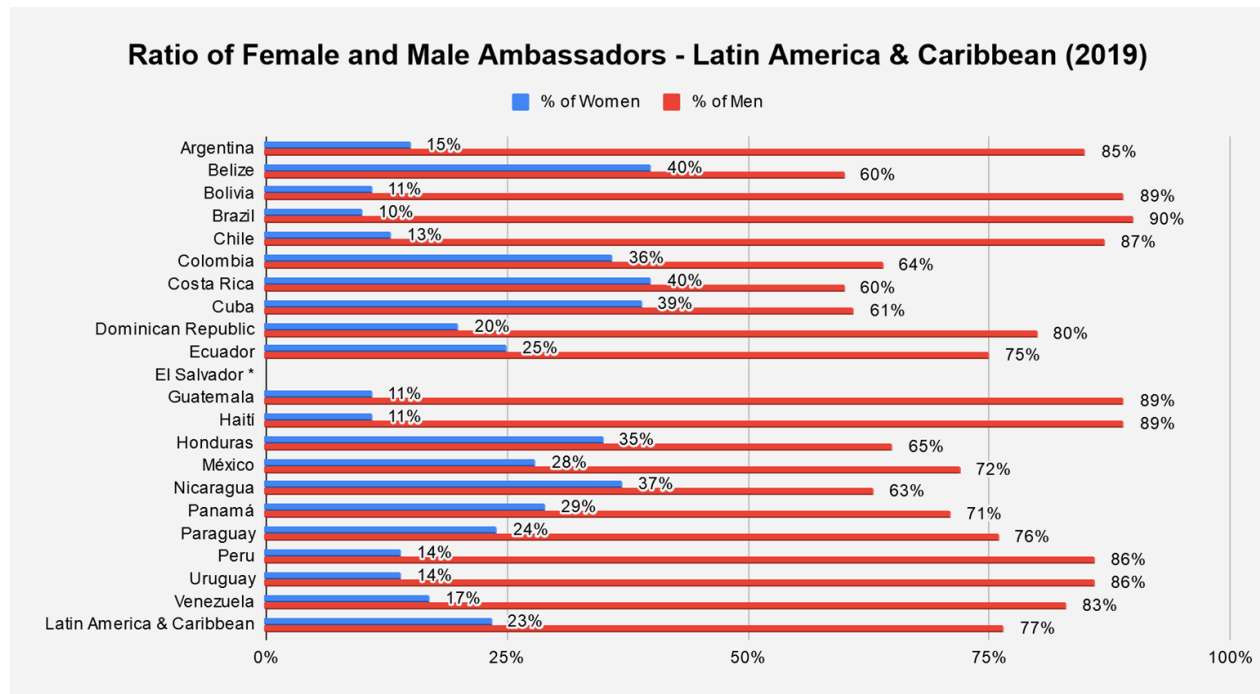
Source: Based on the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2019) of all concerned countries. *El Salvador had at the time of retrieving data a government in transition, therefore no reliable data was available

Table 1. Case selection with values on structural factors and outcome

	High % of women in ministerial positions		High Levels of GDP per capita		Main explanatory variable	Number of female ambassadors appointed	
Costa Rica	1	(50%)	1	(4th)*	?	1	(40%)
Chile	1	(47%)	1	(3rd)*	?	0	(13%)

1= high score on variable; 0= low score on variable

*ranking in GDP per capita in Latin America out of 21 countries

Based on literature specialized in the subject of gender equality, cultural factors and beliefs related to the perception of a woman, the family situation and role of women in society may place women in a disadvantageous position. This can create more challenges and hurdles to obtain a high position in the diplomatic field. In general, men are perceived to be more capable and skilled to perform most tasks than women (Correll 2004, p97). According to a study of Ridgeway (2001) depending on the context, the perception of women as suitable and effective leaders is altered; they are seen as less effective leaders than men in military contexts and leadership roles that are more male-dominated (Ridgeway 2001, p649). In this line, I will explore the family situation and role of women in diplomacy of the selected countries to determine whether this is a variable that explains the difference in outcome between the cases. As addressed in the literature review of this thesis, such an exploration also seems relevant to shed light on developing further research by scholars in the field.

4.2   Case selection

The selection of cases in this research is based on shared structural factors with a different score on the outcome, the number of female ambassadors. The main requirement was that country-level data was available. Uruguay would have been a viable option as well to compare with Costa Rica, nonetheless it was discarded due to limitations of this research.

Costa Rica

The country has a presidential governmental system (Town & Niklasson 2016), with a specific National Institute for Women (translated from Spanish) representing the interest of this group in society (Government of Costa Rica, 2019). In 1923 when the feminist League (translated from Spanish) emerged, the fight for women's rights in Costa Rica was initiated. Over the years the movement insisted on the voting right for women before the Congress, which was finally achieved in 1949. Because primacy always was given to men, the prevalence of the characteristic of this system in society needed to change, both by legislation and agreement on the percentage of women in all positions of popular election. In 2001 a gender quota was approved, stating a minimum of 40% women in all party structures and assemblies. Gender parity before the law in governmental representation was however reached when this was increased to 50% in 2009 (Museo Nacional Costa Rica 2013). As from 2018 under the leadership of President Carlos Alvaro

its cabinet is currently gender balanced. The high female representation is also reflected in the ministry of Foreign Affairs with 40% of female ambassadors, making Costa Rica a suitable case study to investigate.

Since Costa Rica does not has an army since its abolishment in 1949 as one of the few countries in the world, much more budget has been dedicated to education, resulting in one of highest participation rates of the population in the region. In addition, the educational system is mainly public ensuring a more equal access and increased opportunities for women to follow education.

Chile

Compared to other parts of South America, Chile is a rich country with a high GDP per capita, making it the second richest country of Latin America. Alike Costa Rica, Chile holds a presential governmental system and has a special Ministry for women: Ministry for the Woman and Gender Equality (translated from Spanish) (Government of Chile 2019).

The country started to pay attention to women's right over a century ago in 1877. It was then when the minister of Public Instruction granted women the right to access university. In 1913 the first Chilean feminist movements started to rise, increasing their influence over the years. This resulted in the National Council of Women (translated from Spanish) which presented projects on the civil, political, and legal rights for women. In 1925 this effort lead to the Maza Act which allowed married women to manage their salary, amongst other important accomplishments. Through this National Council controversial issues such as birth control, divorce and abortion were also raised (Archivo Nacional de Chile 2019). In the years that followed the pressure was increased, causing for the creation of National Committee Pro Women's Right (translated from Spanish) that resulted in voting rights in municipal elections in 1934. Just as Costa Rica, women's right to vote for all elections (municipal and presential) was achieved in 1949. Setting back democracy during a period of military dictatorship (1973-1990) the country regained its official democracy in the 90's. Shortly after the National Women's Service (translated from Spanish) was created to address and defend gender equality issues which is part of the national government and the beforementioned ministry. Currently, there are numerous females in high positions within the Chilean public sector, with an overall increase of female participation in the last 20 years. Nonetheless, in the diplomatic sector this number is still low, making Chile a fitting case study to investigate and compare with Costa Rica.

Both countries are part of a larger project, Latin-American women in numbers (translated from Spanish), an initiative for this continent by FLACSO[7] as part of UNESCO to create more insight on the position of women in all aspects of life (social, cultural, economic, political).

Units of observation and analysis

For this study, the units of observation are the individual diplomats from both Chile and Costa Rica that have been approached for interviews. The unit of analysis is the Foreign Service in Costa Rica and Chile.

4.3   Data collection

The data was collected by using both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was drawn from semi-structured interviews with embassy officials of the selected countries, who hold crucial tasks concerning the representation before their country. Semi-structured interviews were selected due to the identification of both context-related and specific knowledge of the expert (Meuser and Nagel 2009). Context-related knowledge describes actions or input of others active in the context of diplomacy e.g., head of state or ministers and specific knowledge translates to actions of the embassy officials themselves, making this a suitable tool for interview conduction. These types of interviews also open the possibility to ask follow-up questions.

An interview guide similar for all interviewees, in both Spanish and English, was used to conduct these semi-structured interviews. By interviewing respondents with comparable positions in both countries and using a similar interview guide, the data collection also contributes to the establishment of equivalence between the compared cases (Landman, 2002, p33-36). The interview guide is composed of questions addressing different elements and dimensions of national and organizational factors affecting women to reach leadership positions in diplomacy in Latin America. The participants were queried i.a. about their view on the female underrepresentation in their sector in general, reasoning for their country's current performance and suspected barriers to gender equality and the role that their organization plays itself. A total of nine interviews were conducted with officials in six different countries, each lasting approximately between 30 and 50 minutes. For reasons of preference one interview was conducted with two participants, therefore, for citing purposes these officials were considered individually. All interviews were conducted in either Spanish, English, or a mixture thereof,

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[7] *Facultad Latino Americana de Ciences Sociales* (Latin American Institute for Social Sciences)

depending on the preference of each official. Due to privacy reasons the respondents were not identified in this research. For in-text referencing however, they are coded – See table 2.

The respondents were selected based on the following criteria: The salience of tasks and relevance of their position for the purpose of this research and the equivalence of ranks between interviewees. Both criteria contribute to establish equivalence between cases. Both men and women were approached to minimize confirmation bias (Toshkov, 2016, p.282) in Costa Rican and Chilean embassies located in the same countries, where possible, in Europe, Asia and Latin America. The interviewees hold respectively the following positions: Ambassador, Consul, *Chargé d'affairs* and member of parliament. In three cases in which an interview with the Chilean Consul was conducted, the male ambassadors had prior engagements or were obstructed.

To supplement data retrieved from the interviews, secondary sources are used. These are composed of documents mainly retrieved from the Worldbank, Inter-Parliamenty Union, Latinobarometro and ECLAC/CEPAL, official governmental documents and websites, and other internal documents provided by the interviewees. By combining both types of data collection, the validity and reliability of this research are increased (Bryman, 2012, p392).

4.4   Operationalization

Based on the theoretical framework, two propositions were presented with the aim of further exploring the effects of cultural factors on females in leadership positions in the diplomatic field. As previously mentioned, nine interviews have been conducted amongst Chilean and Costa Rican diplomats and one member of parliament. Based on analysis of empirical evidence found in the responses, these propositions are acknowledged or disputed and further elaborated on.

To properly evaluate and compare the qualitative data in these interviews, the data has been broken down by dividing it into different categories and processing it in a coding scheme following three steps: open, axial, and selected coding. The result of these steps are the selected concepts, divided between the two levels, national and organizational that will be investigated – See table 3. First, in open coding I labeled all relevant data from the responses related to societal or organizational culture per country and through this identified four categories. Second, in axial coding I specified these into sub-categories to confirm an accurate representation of responses. Finally, in selective coding all sub-categories were compared and then grouped together into equivalent categories when highly similar. The results are the selected categories, that are briefly explained in the next column to avoid room for interpretation. When analyzing the interviews, I will

mainly focus on these selected concepts and will use them to compare Costa Rica and Chile. The analysis and results of this are found in the next chapter.

4.5   Research limitations

Since a small-N study is used it reduces the scope of analysis and the possibility to generalize the results on Latin America as a whole (Toshkov 2016, p828). In addition, the thesis is not conclusive and will therefore not offer a well-rounded answer to the research question. However, with a comparative and exploratory research, more in-depth information is revealed providing more contextual factors and generating new propositions for future studies. Another issue that arises with small-N comparisons is measurement validity since this design cannot rely on extensive data to reduce measurement error (Toshkov 2016, p259). A way to diminish this error and increase both the validity and reliability of measurement is through in-depth analysis of cases (p261). The MSSD II design cannot not properly cover causal mechanism or random variation (p.267), resulting in a design that cannot establish the level of influence of these in the cases, but can however discover a commonality between the compared cases. Extending the case selection can diminish this effect although lack of similar performing cases renders this often unachievable (p.268). Another option to address this is either a within-case analysis or process tracing. Due to the subjective narrative of interviews the qualitative information generated through those is subject to research bias (Toshkov 2016, p279).

Table 2. List of respondents

Respondents	Position	Gender	Years of Service	In text reference
Respondent 1	Ambassador of Costa Rica	F	> 23	CR1
Respondent 2	Ambassador of Costa Rica	F	> 20	CR2
Respondent 3	Chargé d'affairs / Consul of Costa Rica	F	< 20	CR3 / CR4
Respondent 4	Ambassador of Costa Rica	F	> 30	CR5
Respondent 5	Member of parliament of Costa Rica	F	-	CR6
Respondent 6	Consul of Chile	M	5	C1
Respondent 7	Consul of Chile	F	5	C2
Respondent 8	Consul of Chile	F	> 15	C3
Respondent 9	Ambassador of Chile	F	> 6	C4

Table 3. Interview data table

Culture	Selected coding categories	Explanation
Societal	Role models	Female figures with noteworthy achievement (athletes, scientists, ministers, CEO's etc.)
	Tradition, stereotypes, and machismo	Repetition of historical patterns in role division between sexes, upholding traditional views (man = breadwinner, woman = family caretaker)
	Education	All levels of formational training and schooling; primary, secondary, high, college, university
	Social change	Tendencies and movements in society, different from previous sustained ideas and ideology
Organization	Political will, Law, and Leadership	Willingness and progressive view of political leaders, supporting laws on gender equality, advocating leadership on (promoting) equal rights
	Organizational structure	The way the Foreign Service as organization is designed and organized
	Overachievement	Displaying extensive capability and skills to prove your worth
	Sorority	The feeling of belonging to and being part of a female group in a male-dominated field

5.   Results and Analysis

In this chapter results from nine interviews with Costa Rican and Chilean diplomats are analyzed and compared. The selected concepts (table 3) are the main focus points throughout this analysis. First, I will briefly present the findings of Costa Rica that are associated with its high female representation. Second, I will present the findings that can be linked to the low percentage of female representation in Chile. Then, I will compare both countries in line with the previous identified cultural factors in the theoretical framework. Also, additional factors that are of influence on female representation in high leadership positions in the diplomatic field are identified. Ultimately, through answering the propositions it is determined whether cultural factors indeed explain the difference in representation of women in leadership position in diplomacy between both countries. The results are summarized in a simplified visual representation.

5.1   Costa Rica

I will present multiple factors indicated by the interviewees to be of positive influence on the representation of women in leadership positions in the Costa Rican Foreign Service and, therefore, may explain their high female percentage. These are divided into cultural factors at two levels: societal and organizational. Factors indicated that do not positively contribute to the female share of leaders are discussed in the analysis, together with these factors of Chile. The reason for this is to create dichotomy between the two countries to compare them, which will be the focus of the analysis and the conclusion.

5.1.1 Societal culture

Role models

The effects on Costa Rican women of having role models in their country, referring to women who have (held) important positions in both the public and private sector, was emphasized as very valuable by more than half of the respondents. A previous vice-president, Campbell, was highlighted as a good example for women, also due to her ethnicity (woman of color). Having more good female role models is thought to benefit the trend of women reaching higher positions.

Nonetheless, for many years the Foreign Service's Union president was a man, with always a woman as his secretary, just as the Foreign Service director always was a man until recently. It was pointed out that these types of examples are significant and symbolic in the sense that it displays that women still struggle more to reach leadership positions. The Member of Parliament stated that it remains a challenge to shape the idea of leaders:

"It has been socially constructed that great leaders are men, and it is time for women to step up and change this mindset." (CR6)

Education

The long-standing history of education in Costa Rica beamed through all responses as one of the major influences on the high percentage of women in leadership positions. Almost all pointed out the high quality of public education and training. One ambassador argued that the equal access to schooling for both women and men is fundamental to explain this high percentage. In addition, education is highly integrated in the society. Reason for this is that the country has been investing increasingly more in education (7.4% of GDP in 2017) and health i.a. after abolishing their army in 1948. According to one of the respondents often is said that:

"Teachers are the army of Costa Rica." (C1) [translated from Spanish].

Education is instilled in girls from the beginning and allows women to empower themselves, to grow, thus, to become independent. This has resulted in many highly educated women who are now an active part of the labor market:

"This [education] without a doubt has had an important impact on getting good results regarding gender." (CR4) [translated from Spanish]

Social change

The shift in society towards more awareness on gender(ed) issues and the discussion of the traditional female role in the family was specified several times. It was common was for women to not study, stay at home until they got married and have children earlier in life (in their twenties). With a growing consciousness on gender equality and increasingly more benefits for women, this tendency has started shifting over time. Now, women are having children in their 30ies which also allows for more time to develop a career. Certain regulations are already regularly debated to ensure greater balanced participation between women and men in the household. These discussions will continue to raise awareness in the next generations, resulting in greater gender equality on multiple levels.

5.1.2 Organizational culture

Political will, law, and leadership

It became evident throughout all interviews that the importance of political will exerted by top decision makers is key for achieving a more gender balanced representation in all political areas.

All interviewees highlighted that Costa Rica's current president[8] is greatly supporting gender equality, with excellent vision that strongly promotes this process. This is reflected in the current government that has reached complete parity, with 14 female and 11 male ministers. As for Foreign Affairs, all top positions but the minister himself are occupied by women. More than half of the respondents stated that not only having many females in top positions, a strong commitment to education and a potent feminist agenda has nursed this, but more specifically:

> "having a history of female empowerment" (CR3)

has resulted in this high number of female ambassadors. This long history also holds numerous laws that have supported this trajectory of gender equality. Multiple examples were given, such as the rights for women to vote in 1953 and the law for promotion of social equality for women[9] in 1990, which states that in political matters, both in elected and appointed offices, the equal participation at all times and levels of both women and men must be guaranteed. Other reforms state that women and men with the same job [in the public sector] cannot be paid differently. According to the MP, even though it was a challenging process for the congress gender parity is now achieved through quotas. This focus and corresponding rulings are the products of long-term institutional decisions Other institutions have also contributed to facilitate gender equality, such as the national health institute for women and the national insurance institute, allowing women who stay or work at home to be insured.

The abovementioned is in different ways inextricably intertwined with leadership style and the embodiment of what a leader should be. Nonetheless, a political decision is fundamental/crucial/imperative/indispensable to achieve gender equality:

> "It is important that female leadership exists at this level since this allows capable and experienced women to be appointed at the highest level. Otherwise, it can take many years for a woman to reach this level." (CR1) [translated from Spanish]

It was emphasized multiple times that despite the president's effort, women encounter more difficulties than men to enter certain negotiations and circles, since power-centered and decision-making spheres are still occupied by men.

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[8] Carlos Alvarado Quesada (2018-present)
[9] N.º 7142; *Ley de promoción de la igualdad social de la mujer*

Organizational structure

The Foreign Service is one of the fields that has made the most progression in terms of gender equality. It was specified that there is an internal culture of meritocracy on which promotion is based and there is a commission that qualifies these promotions. In addition, the same opportunities and salaries apply for women as for men when competing for a certain position. Therefore, it was highlighted that the Foreign Service and the diplomatic career are places that offer the greatest advantages for women. Two ambassadors highlighted that more women (54%) are active in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs eventually resulting in more women in higher ranks, nonetheless, top positions are still held by men.

Significant was the notion of having a family in this field where especially women face difficulties, therefore, most of them are single or do not have a family. This is due to that in general a diplomat career is subject to constant relocation. A different angle was provided by one of the respondents that underlined the consequences of political appointments versus career appointments in the Foreign Service. With more career diplomats appointed, the Foreign Service remains more stable and thus providing more equitable opportunities to reach the position of ambassador, whereas political appointments change every 4 years, depend on political will and are linked to the connectedness to political power:

"(..) where the more connected one has more opportunity, and those are in general men."

(CR3)

When asked about initiatives in the Foreign Service for women to reach top positions, the answer was that there is nothing specifically done to establish that, yet also there are no quantified restraints inhibiting this. More specifically, the organizational dynamics determines whether there is a [gender] balanced environment or not, according to one of the ambassadors; subtle forms of discrimination are experienced daily through use of language and the priority of men over women.

5.2   Chile

In the following sections, I will present several factors indicated by the interviewees to have a negative effect on the representation of women in leadership positions in the Chilean Foreign Service, which may explain their low percentage of female leaders. These are divided in two cultural levels: societal and organizational. Factors indicated that do positively contribute to a higher ratio of women are further discussed in the analysis, alongside those factors of Costa Rica.

5.2.1 Societal culture

Tradition, stereotypes, and *machismo*

There are many social and gender stereotypes imposed on women in society which can be maintained by tradition and machismo, that are reflected in the Foreign Service. Frequently mentioned was that traditionally men have occupied the decision-making areas which has helped them to reach high positions. Originally the access to the diplomatic academy was limited to sons, friends, cousins etc. which are part of the cultural prejudices that this is a career only for men, one of the respondents pointed out.

In general, not necessarily in the diplomatic field, it is expected that women follow men and not vice versa. All participants pointed out that gendered roles are often so embedded and naturalized in the national culture that the first step is to recognize the inequality in society as a social problem. Before applying to the diplomatic academy one respondent had said to her that:

> *"Nobody will marry you"* (..), *"no husband will give up his career if you want to become a diplomat because it is so hard to follow." (C2)*

Almost all respondents mentioned the negative effect of machismo on maintaining certain traditional perceptions. One respondent remarked that even though there are female diplomats where the partner takes care of the house, this is still an exception to the rule as many men are not willing to take up this role. As many Latin American countries are highly *machista* and socially conservative, gendered stereotypes are repeated, which makes stereotypes hard to change. As example was given that there are people from previous generations that prefer to talk to men instead of dealing with a woman, which makes it harder for women to carry out their job. Another factor that was pointed out was the different use of language that is used between men and women: often, men are treated with more respect. It was also argued that nowadays the effect of stereotypes on women to enter the workforce is not the problem per se, getting promoted and reaching higher positions is the real challenge due to this gender stereotyping.

The traditional role of woman as caretaker of the family resonated strongly throughout all responses. It was repeatedly confirmed that this is still one of the main barriers that women in any sector are up against:

> *"The main limitations are the ones the same society imposes, and the leading one is the fact that a woman should take care of the family." (C3) [translated from Spanish]*

In general, many women struggle to balance a work-family life. For women in diplomacy it is considered one of the, if not *the* largest obstacle. Multiple respondents emphasized that these kinds of stereotypes reinforce the belief that a woman needs to renounce a partner, children or just cannot have a family when entering the Foreign Service. One respondent added that these stereotypes ultimately drive women away from a diplomatic career and stated that in this way the main enemy for gender inequality are el machismo, preconceptions, and gender etiquette. 30 years ago, women encountered more barriers on personal and family level to achieve high positions. At that time, it was not common to see women entering the diplomatic career as women were ought to take care of their family. One respondent with many years in the position as ambassador mentioned that having a family is a personal choice and is not incompatible with a diplomatic career, nonetheless it is true that most women do not have a family. Younger respondents gave examples of how this is reflected in questions they have received:

"Do you dedicate yourself to your career or your family?" (C3) [translated from Spanish]

[When working late] *"Who will take care of the kids?" (C2)*

One of them pointed out that very few men would receive the same question, emphasizing the myth of women having to choose between those two. She said that the importance lays on not to stereotype who takes care of the children, as preferring one over the other:

"*It is more that you are 'genderly' obligated to carry out a certain role." (C2)*

Another example given by a male respondent was that when it happens to be the man who takes care of the children, he is perceived as almost a hero. Indicating that this is not something heroic but simply part of what is normal, he points out that society at large needs to expose these gender roles that are appointed to women. In this line, another respondent added that one must be an advocate for the idea that parenting is a co-responsibility and not a gender associated one, to change this perception.

Social change

Some issues are so naturalized in society that people are not aware and those who address these issues as wrong will find resistance. One interviewee stated that a typical reply in general by people is that 'it has always been like this', nevertheless that does not mean that it is correct. Another participant acknowledged that:

"*Social changes are unfortunately always a reaction." (C1) [translated from Spanish]*

When it comes to gender equality, the example was given of a sensational femicide that attracts enough media attention to generate commotion for institutions to act. Almost all respondents communicated that the persisting perception of women's role in families, in society and in their profession needs to be continuously addressed to change these stereotypes. They mention that there has been a lot of progress already, yet it is important to continue this development. In various ways these responses include that education on a social level is necessary to alter the view on women's roles in society. It was highlighted that (reaching) gender equality is ongoing process and not an objective, with awareness as starting point:

"*It is hard to reverse something of which you don't know you are lacking.*" *(C2)*

5.2.2 Organizational culture

Political will, law, and leadership

A couple of interviewees explained the difference between a career diplomat and a diplomat by political appointment to indicate that a part of the explanation of the skewed female representation can be found here. As the president is responsible for appointing ambassadors and men traditionally occupied most of decision-making spheres this resulted in appointment of men on ambassador's level as well. One respondent who has been an ambassador for a good amount of time emphasized the fact that appointments are often based on confidence instead of a person's preparation for the career. Another interviewee added that nowadays, every time when ambassadors are appointed, greater attention is paid to whether women are assigned to certain placements. Here the importance of the mission or country of the appointment was magnified since some have never had a female ambassador. To some posts recently a female ambassador has been appointed for the first time (Haiti and Palestine) yet others still must see the first female ambassador coming (Washington e.g.).

The importance of laws is briefly mentioned by the younger respondents, but they point out that daily change is made through dialogue. One specified that, the velocity of societal change and its associated demands is much faster than the speed of institutions. 'Red tape' is given as a possible reason, yet it is also acknowledged by several participants that Foreign Services is a very rigid institution. Another participant confirmed this: diplomacy is more traditional field and therefore changes take place at an even slower rate than in other ministries. The interviewee continued that Chile is a legalistic country; therefore, everything needs to go through law. This needs to be managed adequality, so functionaries understand why a topic e.g., child provisions are important for women with families. Younger respondents noted that until 2018 there were still laws in place

that discriminated against women in the public positions e.g., no remuneration for female spouse when travelling with diplomatic partner but vice versa this was the case. They both emphasized that this kind of legislative backing is fundamental to advance on gender equality in all aspects.

Responding to how the representation of women in diplomacy is seen, one of the interviewees stated that there always has existed a vast difference between the sexes. According to her, the increase of female participation has to do with how women in leading public functions like ministers, are perceived. Although there has been some progress on this level, the view that women can hold important positions needs to be increased. Another respondent added that the discrepancy between male and female representation is not only present on the level of ambassadors but also the other levels (e.g., Minister Counselor). Multiple participants stated that the difference on vision on gender exists more between ranks or positions, instead (only) between genders.

Organizational structure

The distinction between time of entrance to the Chilean Foreign Service and being in a high position is pointed out by several interviewees, as a substantial time difference can exist between those two (35 years e.g.,). Therefore, some indicate that probably in 20 to 30 years the effect of female entrees to the Chilean Foreign Service will be more visible. Yet another, more optimistic interviewee voiced that when the current generation is in office in 5 years in higher leadership positions, real gender equality will be visible:

"Perhaps real equality is achieved when the younger generations are longer active in the Service. That way parts of the institutional culture that can be very macho are chipped away with more modern ideas." (C1) [translated from Spanish]

Younger respondents indicate that during their formation there more attention to inequality in the academy. Before this process was less democratic and transparent, as it was traditionally common to appoint family members and friends. Currently, tests, requirements, and barriers for admission to the academy are increasingly more transparent, making it easier for external parties to monitor the process. In turn, this helps to favor meritocracy and gender equality. It also stimulates to tackle some cultural prejudices that maintain the image of diplomacy being a men's career and to alter the "male-stamp" that the Foreign Service still has attached to it. Internally, normalization and awareness about ambitious women aspiring for high positions and being capable is necessary up to the point that there is a balance on this level, according to two interviewees with different

positions. Quotas were suggested as necessary to speed up this process of change since this is slow and thus influences the low number of female diplomats.

When asked about whether gender constitutes an advantage or disadvantage in the diplomatic field the answers varied. All respondents coincided with the fact that differences exist and are visible in different ways, e.g., women contribute to topics from their unique angles. Half of them pointed out that the focus should be on the competences instead of gender in diplomacy. One respondent indicated that it can also be positive:

"Being often the only woman in the room also gives me the opportunity to provide another perspective." (C3) [translated from Spanish]

Another interviewee noted that women do not only have to do their job and perform accordingly, but in addition they also have to address issues that are undealt with in diplomacy e.g., a monthly allowance is given for each family member when men are accompanied and vice versa women would not receive this allowance. She said that in the base diplomacy has created more advantages for men.

5.3 Analysis: Comparison between countries

In this section, I will analyze the observed results of Costa Rica and Chile to explain how the differences between them can account for the fact that the Chilean Foreign Service has fewer women in leadership positions compared to Costa Rica. Since both countries vary on the dependent variable, I will do this by addressing the cultural factors described in the propositions first. Then, I will elaborate on other identified factors that can be of further influence and possibly provide an explanation for the difference.

5.3.1 Examination of proposition 1
When there is a strong role division between men and women in a national culture, where women carry more responsibility for the family, less women reach leadership positions in the Foreign Service.

The subject of female gender roles linked to family tasks was undeniable throughout all interviews, both in Costa Rica and Chile. In general, these gender roles are a certain part of the patriarchal society. Moreover, this task assignment to women is fortified by the present *macho*-culture in both countries. It was evident that the effects of the traditional role division in households run deep in these societies. When society at large preserves and supports this belief, it resonates into multiple other areas. The fact that several Chilean and Costa Rican diplomats pointed out that the

traditional idea of a great leader is believed to be male and needs to change, underscores this. The lack of fruitful efforts for active incorporation of female diplomats relates to this view since women are less considered as potential leaders. When either consciously or subconsciously the macho-mindset is shaped to automatically see men as the only suitable candidates as leaders, this undoubtedly affect at the minimum the consideration of women to be appointed as ambassadors. This in combination with motherly stereotypes imposed on women fortifies the gap between gender tasks assignments. With those particular imagines attached to gender embedded in society, men as leaders and women as mothers, it creates a vicious circle that is very challenging to break and does not favor women in the diplomatic field or in general, regardless of the country.

Although the effects of strong role division on gender representation are visible in higher positions in both countries, Costa Rica still has one of the highest numbers of female ambassadors in Latin America. One item that stood out as a major difference was the long educational history that Costa Rica harbors since the abolishment of their army in 1949. Since then, a substantial amount of Costa Rica's budget has been geared towards education[10] which, compared to Chile, gives Costa Rica an advantage of the preparation of capable women to select for the Foreign Service for many decades. Added to this, there is a crucial difference between the educational system between those countries, namely public versus privatized education, as is often the case in Latin America. Costa Rica has a public educational system, making educational accessible for every social layer of society. As a larger part of society is educated, women gain more independence and can combat the traditional mother image attributed to them as only female role. As result, a larger number of possible female candidates are eligible for top positions.

However, Chilean educational institutions are almost completely privatized leaving education as an elitist option. In contrast to Costa Rica, the educational budget[11] of Chile for the few public government-funded schools is much less substantial. The effects of traditional gender roles considered, it is plausible that this imbalance to access between social classes also translates to more boys than girls entering the educational system and thus, creates an institutionalized inequality. When limited budget is available for schooling it is not unlikely that the males will receive this, when females are perceived as future mothers.

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[10] 7,4% of GDP spent on education in 2017 (World Data Bank, 2017)
[11] 5,4% of GDP spent on education in 2017 (World Data Bank, 2017)

The difference that lies in the allocation of national budget together with a public educational system has certainly advanced possibilities for Costa Rican women on a large scale to be well-prepared for ambassadorship, in contrast to choices of the Chilean government on budget and their educational system. Nonetheless, both countries display similar challenges when it comes to socially educating people; many still do not understand that having a family is not only the women's job. Especially the younger diplomats generally provided a much stronger outlook on 'outdated' gender roles. In both countries the low number of female diplomats with families, or the vast number of female diplomats that are either single or divorced, underlines the division that women are ought to choose between two roles, nourished by these common beliefs. At this point, a crucial role comes into play for female role models to provide a different example for girls and women to mirror themselves, identify with and to motivate them. To have strong female leaders and other female examples from different fields actively helps to broaden certain possibilities for women, especially in traditionally male dominated fields. The previous Chilean president Michelle Bachelet was often highlighted as valuable role model for women in the country, whereas a previous female Costa Rican vice-president Epsy Campbell served as a significant role model and the first of African descent in that position. In both Chile as Costa Rica the importance of role models is apparent to promote the notion of gender equality. Only when a framework that fundamentally supports gender equality such as, amongst others, gender laws or equal access to education is properly managed, female role models can have a profound stimulating effect on penetrating and perforating established gender roles.

To what extent these traditional gender role divisions affect other interconnecting spheres is challenging to measure, since they are highly entrenched in different levels in society and over time. Cultural elements such as *machismo* and typical examples of role divisions passed on by previous generations are interactive or interfere with political views and individual beliefs. This makes it also challenging to determine the *exact* impact these gender roles have on female representation in the Foreign Service. However, more than Chile, Costa Rican's extensive educational track record has greatly contributed to and partially allowed for more women in top positions in diplomacy, though it is not an isolated building block for gender equality. In sum, traditional gender roles influence in various ways how women are perceived which is in the end determines the number of women as ambassadors or in other top positions. Therefore, a strong role division where women carry more responsibility for the family causes for women to reach less leadership positions.

5.3.2 Examination of proposition 2

P2: As the Foreign Service employs more men than women, less women reach leadership positions in the Foreign Service.

The employment of diplomats in both countries takes place via two different processes, namely, through political appointments, and by following the career path established by the diplomatic career. Concerning the latter, in Chile as well as in Costa Rica there is a diplomatic academy preparing future diplomats, however, to reach a position of ambassador it takes many years. Besides this trajectory, political will from the head of state is also necessary to be appointed as ambassador. Consequently, it is important to consider who is part of decision-making circles in such political spheres. Both countries showed to have a diplomatic academy in place as well as a structured diplomatic career which have incorporated more women in the latest generations. The former is relevant to bring more women into the career, however because of the existence of political appointments and the fact that career diplomats still depend on political will to attain high positions, political will and the presence of more women in political spheres seem crucial. It can be assumed that if those circles are mainly occupied by men, it generates a perpetual motion of appointing men in top positions. Even though Costa Rica currently has a government with parity amongst ministerial positions, this is one of few exceptions in Latin America since the masculine predominance is very high on these levels.

Following the previous idea, and for the purposes of this research, it is important to identify if there exist favorable conditions for women in Costa Rica to enter the political spheres that might get them closer to be appointed in a high level diplomatic post. In this regard, the data retrieved from my research identifies the salience of the parity law in Costa Rica (Law 7142). This law requires political parties to propose the same number of men and women as candidates running for a political position, even at early stages of their internal electoral processes. This make an important contribution to achieve gender parity in the government and the parliament. Eventually this is reflected in different ministries including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Presidential vision and leadership

Besides supportive laws, another element that appears crucial to achieve higher numbers of female ambassadors is the vision and type of leadership exerted from the president. The literature has widely explored how inclusive leadership in combination with transformational leadership styles favors women to reach higher participation in public organizations (see Ashikali and Groeneveld (2015), Kearney and Gebert (2009), Randel, Galvin et al. (2018)). This leadership

style seems to be currently exerted by Costa Rica's President Alvarado whose vision and actions on favor of gender equality were emphasized by all respondents. Alvarado appointed the same number of women as men in this cabinet when he started his mandate and has continuously promoted gender equality as one of his priorities. Different from Costa Rica, Chile only approved a parity law in the first quarter of 2020 for women to hold half of the positions in parliament. However, this was a law limited to a new political event that Chile will undertake this year. Therefore, the effects of this law in terms of contributing to a more equitable participation between men and women are yet to be seen.

In sum, both having a parity law in place and the presence of a transformational leader promoting inclusiveness appears to be key for Latin American countries to appoint more women in high leadership positions since more women will be part of political decision-making circles. Therefore, not only if the Foreign Service employs more men, but if the general tendency of the government and president is to employ more men than women, less women will be able to reach high leadership positions in diplomacy.

Generational gap

Throughout the interviews, the younger diplomats in general seemed to have a better understanding of the importance of achieving gender equality and eliminating the view of traditional gender roles in the sector compared to diplomats belonging to older generations. This 'fresh' view appears to be consistent with social developments on this topic. It also seems to be the case that the new groups of people enrolling into the diplomatic academies of both countries are currently much more balanced between men and women than in older generations. However, this only applies to career diplomats since political appointees still rely on political will.

A graphic description of these interacting factors of both propositions is combined in the following visual representation on the two cultural levels. Although much more elements influence female representation on the highest level, this is a simplified version to summarize the findings of this chapter.

Overachievement and sorority

Almost all Chilean respondents and almost half of the Costa Rican's identified that women always and continuously must demonstrate more capacity, formality, and seriousness to enter certain spheres whereas men are less judged. This continuous display of overachievement can be seen as a reaction or result from women as minority in predominantly masculine field (Kanter 1977) although it is not limited to the Foreign Service or to the investigated countries. It does not

necessarily affect the representation of women in this sector. Another occurrence is the sorority between women both in Costa as in Chile, which helps to generate support and to address certain issues that can be identified by especially women. Due to more difficulties faced by women than men in this field, it seems that comradery is key to navigate through the development of their careers. As indicated by the respondents having access to these sororities helps them to do their job better, which increases their odds to attain high leadership positions. Although this does not affect the female representation, these sororities can be perceived as a reaction to or result of the masculine environment in the Service.

6. Conclusion and discussion

In this final chapter, conclusions based on the conducted empirical research are presented, the research question is answered. The limitations discuss the constraints of this research as well as some implications for future studies and for practice.

6.1 Summary

This investigation started by acknowledging that women have progressed much on their incorporation in different levels of the workforce, however, in most organizations and institutions gender parity on the highest level is still an illusion. Women are often excluded from top positions in male-dominated field as is the case in the Foreign Service. Much literature exists on gender equality, where theories such as the glass ceiling or glass cliff, the effects of social constructs like stereotypes and the impact of skewed proportions provide different angles to explain gender imbalance. Nonetheless, gender research in the diplomatic field is very limited, cultural influences on diplomatic representation are little investigated, and it is almost solely focused on the Western world. From this the following research question derived:

What cultural factors explain the representation of women in leadership positions in diplomacy in Latin America?

To answer the research question, I compared two Latin American countries, Costa Rica and Chile that scored similar on several structural factors (level of GDP, national policies on families, labor market participation and women in ministerial positions), yet had a substantial difference in outcome in terms of female ambassadors. Costa Rica has one of the highest numbers of female ambassadors in Latin America and worldwide, whereas Chile has sufficient space for improvement of the female ratio in leadership positions. To determine the difference between those countries, I conducted interviews to disentangle multiple cultural factors that could account for this variation. To analyze these cultural factors more accurately, they were divided into two levels, namely national or societal culture and organizational culture. To help answering the research question and to make a clear distinction between the results on both cultural levels two propositions were established:

P1: When there is a strong role division between men and women in a national culture, where women carry more responsibility for the family, less women reach leadership positions in the Foreign Service.

P2: As the Foreign Service employs more men than women, less women reach leadership positions in the Foreign Service.

Throughout the interviews with Costa Rican and Chilean diplomats on different levels it was evident that the impact of gender roles, traditional task divisions in the household and gender stereotypes profoundly affect women in those countries, especially with a macho-culture present that fortifies this. Particularly the aspect of family remains a barrier, resulting in very few female diplomats with families and the rest either divorced or single. These social constructions are one of the largest challenges that women face since they affect all spheres, private and professional, which translates not only to diplomacy but to all fields.

One of the largest differences between the two countries is Costa Rica's long educational history since the abolishment of their army in 1958. Ever since then, Costa Rica invests a high percentage of their GDP in education, making the country currently the highest investor in all Latin America. In addition, their educational system is nearly completely public, making it accessible for all social classes. Chile, on the other hand, still has a highly privatized educational system, making equal access for all very challenging.

Another factor that separated Costa Rica's case from Chile's is the political will, the presidential vision and inclusive leadership, together with their parity law for the government that highly stimulates gender parity on the highest decision-making levels. This translates to other spheres yet especially to the Foreign Service since both type of ambassadors, career ambassadors and political appointees, are depended on political will to be assigned. Chile, however, has adopted a parity law for the government as from early 2020 which will help to increase the ratio of women.

6.2   Answering the research question

The aim of this research was to discover ***what cultural factors can explain the representation of women in leadership positions in diplomacy in Latin America***. Derived from the analysis in the previous chapter I can conclude that there are three key factors that mainly influence gender disparity on the highest level in diplomacy: gender roles, political will, and education.

Gender discriminatory social constructions and their subsequent gender roles are deeply embedded in different layers of society and consequently, impact and interact with political spheres and other domains of decision-making power as well. Reinforced by *machism*o women are greatly affected by these role division, especially in male-dominated fields like the Foreign Service. Since women have a prevalent care -role attributed to them, whereas men have the one of family provider and leader, those roles in society maintain the image of a male leader instead

of a female (Eagly and Karau 2002). Besides the barrier of dealing with these traditional images, women also display high levels of overachievement to prove themselves as equal. Therefore, it can be assumed that traditional gender roles are a crucial factor in explaining low female representation in top positions.

Political will is the second key factor that can determine how much a nation moves towards gender balance in leadership positions. When the head of state adopts an active approach on tackling gender disparities and wields an inclusive leadership style (Ashikali and Groeneveld 2015) it has immense positive impact on women in society at large. Its effect can be extended through laws on gender equality and family policies. The political willingness to achieve a gender equilibrium by governing a feminist agenda vastly aids women to attain positions as leaders in diplomacy, as the appointment of new ambassadors is performed by the head of state.

The third key factor is education which is essential for levelling the playing field to attain top positions in the diplomatic field, as any other. Considering the traditional gender roles, men are more likely to receive an education since they are perceived to be the (sole) provider. This translates to less women well-prepared to attain positions as ambassadors. With a sufficient budget allocated to education and public schools significant thresholds for equal access are removed. This way, a substantial part of the population can receive schooling and thus, education can contribute in explaining a high female representation of ambassadors.

Although Costa Rica and Chile are both comparable on the first key factor and both experience influence by gendered social constructs in society, the combination of political will, with an inclusive approach, and education are the cultural factors that eventually determine the difference between those countries in the female representation of leaders in their Foreign Service.

6.3   Implications and recommendations

Relevant contributions to the literature and practical implications for public managers and decision-making can be derived from the findings of this research.

Implications for literature

This research has brought new perspectives to the literature about the underlying cultural causes constraining women to attain high leadership positions in the public sector, more specifically, in the masculine field of diplomacy. One of the gaps identified was the lack of research on cultural factors. It became evident that various cultural factors affect women negatively, therefore, the findings help to underline their importance for new investigations in the field.

The findings present a cornerstone for scholars interested in understanding the effect of cultural factors in a context of *machismo* prevalence. A qualitative approach helps to uncover behavioral effects and attitudes undermining women's capacities that cannot be easily measured through objective indicators. As showed with the selected cases, this is particularly relevant in countries which perform well on global indicators measuring women participation yet is not reflected in all settings as it is the case of the diplomatic sector. Hence, this research provides new tools for the literature to continue exploring *machismo* in a more comprehensive and integrated way.

By exploring the diplomatic sector, more knowledge on cultural factors limiting women's development in a public, male dominated field has been gained as well. The perception on gender roles in society appear to be the base from which most advancement of women is constructed, although this does not specifically apply to the sector or the region. This implies the salience of incorporation of prevalent gender views in further research, especially with differences between generations altering traditional gender roles. This found generational gap also implies that change is experienced differently but taking place. Thus, future researchers can consider this gap to explain the development of gender representation in other sectors.

Through the selected research design (MSSD II) which allows for exploratory research and aims to generate propositions (Toshkov 2016, p266-269) multiple cultural factors affecting on women's representation in top-positions in diplomacy have been identified. These findings are suitable to propel new propositions that can be used to further explore their effects in male-dominated fields. Also, scholars can apply these findings in other geographical areas and under different settings i.e., professional fields or policy areas.

By presenting the experience of high performing countries on gender equality in the public sector like Costa Rica and demonstrating greater challenges for countries like Chile, new paths for research are opened for similar contexts, e.g., leadership positions in the private sector and countries with a similar educational system as Costa Rica. This mainly seems effective when other necessary indicators such as the access of women to high level education is also high, therefore a contextual analysis should be performed for this purpose.

Practical recommendations

It appears that countries who implement parity laws to (slowly) transform political decision-making circles, are likely to advance positively into a more gender balanced distribution of diplomats in high leadership positions. This seems even more important since political will is crucial to attain high leadership positions as ambassador, either as political appointee or as career diplomat. A

concrete recommendation is to open the debate for the creation of such legal instruments in contexts without a balanced gender distribution in high-leadership positions.

For public policy makers, it is important to investigate ways to support women with partners and families for them to have sufficient opportunities or resources when travelling abroad to join a diplomat appointed abroad. The traditional views of family roles clearly constrain women from developing their careers in the diplomatic sector. These views pose difficulties to women to decide pursuing a career, but also brings financial limitations once they have already started their career. Although this situation may occur with both men and women, it seems to affect female diplomats in higher proportions since their partners are often not willing to quit their jobs to move abroad, contrary to women who are more likely to take such a step since they are often considered to be caretakers of the family. It is plausible that having special policies for women might encourage them to continue with their careers with more confidence and to visualize the possibility of developing their careers in diplomacy without jeopardizing their families.

6.4   Limitations and future research

There are certain limitations to this research that require acknowledgement. This thesis also exposes several other areas where further research is suggested in terms of female representation in the diplomatic field.

6.4.1   Limitations

The first and main limitation is the lack of male ambassadors participating in the interviews. This created an unbalanced representation in the responses and is likely to have affected the outcome of the responses in different aspects, since a male perspective on this matter can differ. Also, men address gender equality related issues likely different way which can reveal or confirm certain patterns. They may perceive this topic as challenging to discuss or are unwilling to do so since men are either directly involved or (active) part of the problem. By the foundation of patriarchy, they are privileged, thus experience much less issues in terms of gender. In fact, their perception of the problem is often altered as result of this and consequently the problem is minimized. If male ambassadors were available for this research, the expectation is that they do acknowledge the problem yet to a lesser extent than women do and present counterparts to demonstrate problems that exist for men, as is not uncommon for a dominant group that feel offended by the other[12]. It is also assumed that the ratio skewed female representation in top positions would have been

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[12] See Carney (2016) on the debate of "Black lives matters" versus "All lives matters", of which the latter derives from the dominant (white) group

downplayed and attributed to different factors (e.g., lack of interested women for diplomacy, more suitable men), presenting a different image of the issue. As suggestion to resolve this limitation, more male participants should be included.

Second, another limitation is related to the chosen research design which creates challenges to avoid selection bias (Toshkov 2016), although negative effects of this bias were reduced by selecting cases based on structural factors in the whole Latin American region. The chosen design limits the analysis to few cases implicating a non-representative sample for the unit of analysis (Foreign Affairs) by exclusion of other relevant cases, like Uruguay. To further lessen the effect of this bias, large-N studies are suitable. In addition, the large amount of data that is collected in large-N studies allows for a deeper contextual analysis to make relevant assumptions, helping to reduce negative effects of this section bias. Incorporating more countries in the analysis can propel further research on other influential cultural factors.

Third, the selected research design does not provide conclusive outcomes, limiting the outcomes to recommendations and the generation of propositions (Toshkov 2016). Therefore, no robust conclusions can be drawn regarding the topic. Other research design that use a deductive approach are a solution for this.

6.4.2 Additional future research

Besides the inclusion of more male respondents as well as more countries for future research as mentioned above, there are other suggestions to further research consider.

Financial limitations and its influence in shaping traditional roles

As explained in my conclusions, evidentially women with families and/or partners face more challenges to develop their careers in diplomacy. It also seems that partners of female diplomats are less willing to quit their jobs and join their partner abroad than the partners of male diplomats. This generates financial limitations that add up as an additional constrain for women in the sector. Further research is needed to identify the effects of measures taken by governments over time to provide greater support for women with families and partners to develop their careers without jeopardizing their personal lives. Therefore, it is interesting to explore how those measures also contribute in reducing the reproduction of traditional gender roles.

Generational gap

Based on the findings in the interviews, it seems that younger generations of diplomat's view gender disparity and its importance of advancing into a balanced gender distribution in the sector

with much more awareness. Therefore, it is relevant to conduct more research to investigate if environments led by younger generations of diplomats allow for increased opportunities for women's career development in diplomacy and subsequently, presents a more gender balanced image. Such research could cover aspects like types of leadership style, and how traditional gender roles are understood by new generations in comparison to older generations. In addition, to compare differences between generations it is recommended to repeat a similar research when newer generations have completely taken office.

Political appointments vs career diplomats

The efforts of professionalization of the sector and developments in the diplomatic career are somehow diminished by the fact that ambassadors can be politically appointed without following the diplomatic academy as initial step. This was partially covered by analyzing factors that allow women to increase their presence in political decision-making circles. However, this analysis cannot entirely explain whether the fact that many high-level diplomats are politically appointed diminishes the chances for women to be selected in such positions or if, in contrast, a country who favors career diplomats rather than political appointments increases the possibility of women to attain these positions. Therefore, it is suitable to investigate the effects of political appointees and career diplomats on the representation of high positioned females in the Foreign Service.

Parity governments

Another direction for further research is on the long-term effects of a gender balanced government. Only since a few years some countries have moved towards a regimen of parity, therefore, little information is available on the long-term effects it has on the representation of highly positioned females in the public sphere. To monitor progress of these effects over time longitudinal studies are recommended to provide data on how this parity influences women in top positions.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Semi-structured interview guidelines Costa Rica/Chile

Interview questions:

- ❖ **1. What is your name and what is your (educational/professional) background upon arrival at the Embassy in _____?**

- ❖ **2. How do you see the representation of women in your sector?**

- ❖ **3.** In the Costa Rican Foreign Service there are currently 17 female ambassadors vs 26 male (a 40% vs 60% ratio, one of the highest currently in Latin America).
  Why do you think Costa Rica has achieved such a high number? According to you, what may have influenced this?
- ❖ **3.** Compared to other Latin American countries Chile is one of the most developed countries and has advanced considerably on gender equality yet has not a very high number of female ambassadors in the Foreign Service (9 women and 60 men resulting in 13% and 87%).
  Why do you think this is or according to you what may have influenced this?

- ❖ **4.** In general, in diplomacy most ambassadors are male and Latin America is no exception to the rule. **Have you perceived this in your career and how?**

- ❖ **5. Why do you think men are more represented in this field?**

- ❖ **6. In what way do you belief that being a woman is an advantage and/or disadvantage being a diplomat/in the diplomatic world? / In your opinion, do you consider that women face more challenges compared with men due to their gender?**
- ❖ *6.1. What do you think are limitations for women to access diplomacy?*

- ❖ **7. In your opinion, how does the Costa Rican/Chilean Foreign Service provide facilities to stimulate women with families to apply and/or accept a senior position?**

- ❖ **8. What kind of regulations or initiatives do you consider necessary to positively influence gender equality on the highest level in diplomacy** (in the institutional culture of the Foreign Service or national culture of Costa Rica/Chile)?

- ❖ **9. Would you like to add something or comment on this theme?**

Appendix 2: Case selection data:
Data collection coding scheme

Country	X1 Women in Ministerial Positions	X2 GDP per Capita ranking	Y Women appointed as Ambassadors
Argentina	Low	High	Low
Belize	N/A	Low	High
Bolivia	Middle	Low	Low
Brazil	Low	Middle	Low
Chile	High	High	Low
Colombia	High	Middle	High
Costa Rica	High	High	High
Cuba	Middle	Middle	High
Dom. Republic	Middle	Middle	Middle
Ecuador	Middle	Middle	Middle
El Salvador	Middle	Low	N/A
Guatemala	Low	Low	Low
Haiti	N/A	Low	Low
Honduras	Middle	Low	High
Mexico	Low	Middle	Middle
Nicaragua	High	Low	High
Panama	Middle	High	Middle
Paraguay	Low	Middle	Middle
Peru	High	Middle	Low
Uruguay	High	High	Low
Venezuela	Middle	N/A	Low

X1	X2
High: +30%	1-5
Middle: 21-30%	6-13
Low: <20%	>13

Outliers	X1	X2	Y
Chile	2	2	0
Costa Rica	2	2	2
Uruguay	2	2	0

0= Low
1= Middle
2= High

Proportion of women in ministerial positions (2016) *

	% of female (2016)	% of male (2016)
Argentina	17,4	82,6
Belize	N/A	N/A
Bolivia	27,3	72,7
Brazil	4	96
Chile	34,8	65,2
Colombia	35,3	64,7
Cuba	25,9	74,1
Costa Rica	30,4	69,6
Dominican Republic	20,8	79,2
Ecuador	27,5	72,5
El Salvador	21,4	78,6
Guatemala	18,8	81,2
Haiti	N/A	N/A
Honduras	27,3	72,7
Mexico	15,8	84,2
Nicaragua	52,9	47,1
Peru	36,8	63,2
Paraguay	15,4	84,6
Panama	29,4	70,6
Uruguay	35,7	64,3
Venezuela	24,2	75,8

 WorldBank (2016). Proportion of women in ministerial positions (%), WorldBank.

*most recent available data on date of access 14-10-2019

GDP per Capita (2018)

Country	2018	Ranking
Argentina	11652,6	5
Belize	5025,2	14
Bolivia	3548,6	17
Brazil	8920,8	7
Chile	15923,4	2
Colombia	6651,3	11
Costa Rica	12026,5	4
Cuba	8541,2	8
Dom. Republic	7650,1	9
Ecuador	6344,9	12
El Salvador	4058,2	16
Guatemala	4549	15
Haiti	868,3	20
Honduras	2482,7	18
Mexico	9698,1	6
Nicaragua	2028,9	19
Panama	15575,1	3
Paraguay	5871,5	13
Peru	6947,3	10
Uruguay	17278	1

WorldBank (2019). GDP per capita (US$), The World Bank.