

## Women in Foreign Trade Policy: The case of Chile (1990-2022)

*Mujeres en la Política de Comercio Exterior: El caso de Chile (1990-2022)*

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### ABSTRACT

Despite the gradual incorporation of women in different spheres of Chilean public policy since 1990, there is not enough research on the different impacts of this. For this reason, this article aims to provide some preliminary conclusions on the number of women, barriers that they face and identified the main topics where they worked in trade negotiations, between 1990 and 2022. The research is oriented to analyze Chilean Free Trade Agreements and at the World Trade Organization, focusing on the Chilean negotiation teams. Some initial findings demonstrate that there has been an increase in the entry of women as negotiators, especially in topics such as trade in services; however few women were appointed as chief negotiators, reflecting a persistent gender

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gap in the workplace and in decision-making. The research is being carried out on the basis of specialized literature and interviews with qualified informants.

**Keywords:** Trade negotiations – Women – Gender and trade policy – Free trade agreements – WTO.

#### RESUMEN

A pesar de la paulatina incorporación de la mujer en distintos ámbitos de la política pública chilena desde 1990, no existe suficiente investigación sobre los distintos impactos de ello. Por esta razón, este artículo pretende entregar algunas conclusiones preliminares sobre el número de mujeres, las barreras que enfrentan e identificar los principales temas en los que han trabajado en las negociaciones comerciales, entre 1990 y 2022. La investigación está orientada a analizar los Tratados de Libre Comercio chilenos y en la Organización Mundial del Comercio, centrándose en los equipos negociadores chilenos. Algunos hallazgos iniciales demuestran que ha habido un aumento en el ingreso de mujeres como negociadoras, especialmente en temas como el comercio de servicios; sin embargo, pocas mujeres fueron designadas como negociadoras principales, lo que refleja una persistente brecha de género en el lugar de trabajo y en la toma de decisiones. La investigación se está llevando a cabo a partir de bibliografía especializada y entrevistas con informadores cualificados.

**Palabras clave:** Negociaciones comerciales – Mujeres – Género y política comercial – Tratados de libre comercio – OMC.

## INTRODUCTION

Since the return to democracy in 1990 and with greater force since the end of the 1990s, women have taken on a more prominent role in the public sphere in Chile. The first woman to be President of the Republic, Michelle Bachelet, was elected in 2005; there was a cabinet with gender parity during her mandate, and an increase—driven by the approval of a quota law, among other reforms—in the proportion of women in the legislature. Despite these trends, an aspect neglected in Chile, unlike in North American and European academia (D’Aoust, 2012; Hudson, Bowen, & Nielsen, 2015; Kelly et al., 1991; Manzano, 2001; McGlen & Sarkees, 2018; Peterson & Runyan, 1999; Tickner, 2001; Towns & Aggestam, 2018) has been the study of women’s participation in foreign policy. The absence of research on Chilean women’s role in international trade initiatives is particularly striking given the importance of this field within the general framework of Chilean foreign policy. Addressing this gap, this article offers some preliminary conclusions about the participation and impact of women negotiators in Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) and in the World Trade Organization (WTO), between 1990 and 2022.

It then turns to a review of trade policy in the context of Chilean foreign policy concerns, focusing on its evolution, key milestones, and the growing involvement of women in this process. It addresses the scanty literature that deals with women’s contribution to Chilean foreign policy and the absence of studies analyzing their role in Chilean trade policy. Next, based on relevant global research, it examines the main arguments advanced at two levels of analysis at which the role of women negotiators can be recognized: the barriers women that have faced and their impact on processes of

negotiation. Finally, some preliminary findings of the study are advanced. The analysis is based on McGlen and Sarkees, who have studied the case of the United States drawing on interviews (McGlen & Sarkees, 2018). In line with Kelly et al. (1991), Smith (2020) and Duerst-Lahti (2008) who have all investigated the situation and influence of women in the public sector, it is essential to understand the actors' perspectives as individuals, which necessarily involves the use of testimony.

Due to the numerous negotiations and the importance of the WTO, the research focuses on the participation of women in bilateral or plurilateral PTAs (32 in all, some of which have more than 20 chapters), and on the WTO team, in particular its ambassadors.

This article reflects the first results of an ongoing investigation which seeks to give visibility to the women who have participated in the formulation and implementation of Chilean trade policy over the last thirty years.

#### FOREIGN POLICY AND TRADE POLICY: WOMEN

Beginning in the 1990s, analysis of the foreign policy concerns of the Chilean state, both as a phenomenon and a process, reflected a political discussion whose main characteristic was the prevailing consensus over the development model and pragmatism. The early debate was marked by the issue of international reinsertion (Fernandois & 1991; Heine, 1991; Manzano, 2001; Rojas, 1993; Tomassini, 1990; Wilhelmy & Infante, 1993; Yopo, 1991). In line with this, various specialized articles on trade policy appeared that reflected its growing importance in the framework of foreign policy (Agosin, 1993; De la Cuadra & Hachette, 1992; Frohmann,

1991; Sáez & Valdés, 1999; Velasco & Tokman, 1993), with a special focus on the bilateral and plurilateral negotiations then underway as the country emerged from dictatorship (Armanet, Alamos, & O’Shea, 1996; Mols, Wilhelmy von Wolff, & Gutiérrez Belmedo, 1995; Wilhelmy & Lazo, 1997).

During the Pinochet regime, under the paradigm of liberalism, an aggressive trade liberalization plan was implemented. Since the country was partially isolated at the international level, the path followed was, on the one hand, unilateral reduction of existing tariff and non-tariff barriers (French-Davis, 2003); on the other, multilateral negotiations within the framework of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). These strategies were complemented by active participation in the Tokyo Round (1973-1979) and the Uruguay Round (1986-1994), in which commitments were made that provided an anchor for these reforms (López & Muñoz, 2018). With the return to democracy, together with the decision to maintain and deepen the existing economic model, “the Government of Chile gave preference to bilateral free trade negotiations and discarded the possibility of joining subregional integration schemes such as Mercosur or the Andean Pact” (DIRECON, 2009, p. 74). In this way, the country set in motion a process of bilateral negotiation that would begin with Economic Complementarity Agreements (ECAs)<sup>1</sup>, mainly in goods and in the region, within the framework of the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), such as: Argentina (ECA 16) and Mexico (ECA 17) in 1991, and would continue with Colombia (ECA 24 - 1993), Venezuela (ECA 23 - 1993), Bolivia (ECA 22 - 1993), Ecuador (ECA

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1 ECA is a denomination used by Latin American countries in the bilateral agreements that they enter into with each other to reciprocally open their goods markets, which are registered in the legal framework of the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI). They point to a greater opening of markets than the Partial Scope Agreements, but less than the Free Trade Agreements. In this type of agreement, all the products of both countries are negotiated.

32 - 1994), Peru (ECA38 - 1998) , Cuba (ECA 42 - 2008) and the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Central America (ratified between 2002 and 2012). This became known as “open regionalism”, a concept whose meaning and effects have been a subject of debate since the mid-1990s (Rojas, 1993; Van Klaveren, 1994) and which guided Chile’s model of economic insertion in democracy, as it sought PTAs with the major world markets. This strategy made it possible to give continuity to the model of market openness imposed by the dictatorship, while also differentiating itself from it. The most important negotiation during this stage was the one that the country began with Mercosur, even though at the same time it had the possibility of joining the United States (DIRECON, 2009; Lagos et.al, 2003; López & Muñoz, 2018). Academic writings evolved from a concern about the transition to the process of international economic insertion (Ffrench-Davis, 2003; López & Muñoz, 2007; Porras, 2003). Faced by the impossibility of joining the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), conversations began with Canada, which led to the signing of Chile’s first FTA in 1997. Canada was a very convenient partner for this first experience, since it facilitated the formation of an important body of negotiators and kept open the possibility of joining NAFTA, an evident ambition of the Chilean economic team. A combination of teams from different ministries acted in this Treasury-led negotiation, in which some women can be identified as advisers, such as Catalina Bau, Liselotte Kana and María Eugenia Wagner.

The 2000s would be marked by the emergence of Asia—a region in which Chilean trade policy aroused positive interest—in the international arena, and China’s entry in 2001 to the WTO. In April 2004, an FTA between Chile and South Korea materialized, and another in 2006 with the People’s Republic of China. This agreement has remained under

permanent negotiation with the involvement of negotiators such as Ana Novik. That same year, negotiations of the Strategic Economic Association Agreement were concluded with Brunei Darussalam, New Zealand and Singapore, known as P4 (predecessor to the Transpacific Partnership (TPP-11) initiative). The scheme raised difficult issues for the women's team due to the negotiations with Brunei. In 2007, a PTA with India and the signing of the Economic Association with Japan PTA were finalized.

In the context of an updated Free Trade Agreement with Canada, an important advance was confirmed with the inclusion, for the first time in our history, of a chapter III N on gender and trade, later to be replicated with the Free Trade Agreement with Uruguay and other countries, in which women like Marcela Otero played a fundamental role. Agreements were later closed with Australia (2009), Malaysia (2012), Hong Kong, Vietnam (2014) and Thailand (2015). This policy has continued, Chile was the first to sign the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA) in 2020 and is in the process of ratifying the TPP-11, as well as other modernizations (Subrei, 2021). Since 1990, 30 PTAs have been signed; with 65 economies<sup>2</sup>, Chile has a network of agreements with the greatest access to world GDP, according to the OECD (2018). In 2022, agreements with Brazil and Ecuador came into force. TPP-11 is currently in the process of ratification and has raised a new challenge to trade policy.

Throughout this process, the Chilean negotiating teams have stood out for their professionalism that has been recognized by many countries, that engaged in negotiation

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2 More information on [www.subrei.cl](http://www.subrei.cl)

procesos. More and more women have served as negotiators, such as Alicia Frohmann and Luz Sosa as chapter heads.

#### WOMEN AND THE ANALYSIS OF THEIR PARTICIPATION IN FOREIGN POLICY

At the end of the 1990s, while issues related to women's participation in international affairs had aroused interest around the world (D'Amico & Beckman, 1995; Genovese, 1993; Kelly et al., 1991), this was not the case in Chile. Research into the participation in foreign policy and influence thereon of different actors and interest groups in Chilean society aroused some attention (Bascuñan, 1993; Bustamante, 1991). The book edited by Artaza and Ross (2012), for example, revealed a thematic and regional vision in the classic tradition of Chilean foreign policy, but it did not include any studies highlighting the role of women as an object of study. The same is true of Robledo's text on the last 30 years of foreign policy since the return of democracy (Robledo, 2020). At the end of the 2000s, studies were published on the role of political parties and Congress, especially, in trade negotiations (Aranda Bustamante & Riquelme Rivera, 2011; Cook, 2012; Gamboa & Huneus, 2008; Valdivieso, 2007), but without differentiating the participation of women. And although Artaza and Ross (2015) expanded the actors studied to include non-governmental entities, businessmen and unions, they did not consider women separately. The same omission can be seen in studies of public opinion as well as of elite viewpoints worked on during the 1990s and recently returned to in the form of interviews (Lopez, Muñoz, Ahumada, 2020; Morandé & Duran, 1993). Fuentes (2007) later reviewed the pending processes of institutional modernization at the Ministry and analysed the difficulties associated with this, exploring corporate resistance and technocratic work, but doing so in general terms and without addressing the issue of the representation

of women in posts of responsibility. In 2018 the book *Chile: actor del sistema multilateral (Chile, Actor of the Multilateral System)* included an article linking women in particular to foreign policy and dealt more broadly with gender and multilateralism. Written by the former minister of the Servicio Nacional de Mujeres (SERNAM, the National Service for Women), Laura Albornoz, the text reviews the history of women's political participation in the various multilateral and subregional agreements that Chile has signed, stressing the challenges faced at the inter-American level in achieving the goal of gender equality in Latin America and the Caribbean as 2030 approaches (Albornoz, 2018).

Shortly after, in the book *Nuevas voces de política exterior: Chile y el mundo en la era post-consensual (2021) (New Voices in Foreign Policy: Chile and the World in the Post-consensual Era (2021)*, Daniela Sepúlveda highlights the importance of a feminist foreign policy that includes the participation of women in key diplomatic positions. She establishes that this policy is a tool for break down cultural resistance in the conduct of foreign policy. Also, outlines that a feminist foreign policy allows discovering new critical approaches, that they do not see in the structures of domination/ traditional subordination necessary responses to challenges current foreign policy (Sepulveda, 2021). And as part of an analysis of the Chilean Foreign Service, Carola Muñoz considers that the main challenge is to incorporate a gender perspective in the Ministry (Muñoz, 2021). Because the development of feminist foreign policy could develop a new paradigm in foreign relations, cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and trade between states.

Also in 2021, Matthias Erlandsen, María Fernanda Hernández-Garza and Carsten-Andreas Schulz, argue that the

impact of presidencies led by women is conditioned by the chief executive's interest in gender parity. In the Latin American context they study the Chilean case during the two terms of Michelle Bachelet (Erlandsen, M., Hernández-Garza, M. F. and Schulz, C. A., 2021b), noting that although Bachelet increased the proportion of female ambassadors, women continued to be in a small minority. Certainly, advances in gender equality "did not carry over into the foreign service nor were they sustained over time since they were not institutionalized" (Erlandsen, M., Hernández-Garza, M. F. y Schulz, C. A., 2021 a).

The growing interest in the subject is reflected in the book *Mujeres y política exterior en América Latina (Women and Foreign Policy in Latin America)*, published in 2022. This work includes two studies that analyze the status of the issue in Chile: "Underrepresentation of women in Chilean diplomacy," by Anita de Aguirre and Marcia Covarrubias and "Gender and Chilean Foreign Policy: Understanding Institutional Barriers," by Natalia Escobar and Olivia Cook. In their conclusions, these studies reinforce ideas pointing to the existence of "mental resistance" to women's incorporation into foreign work that derives from cultural codes and patterns (Aguirre and Covarrubias, 2022) and the need for a multidimensional approach to the subject, which allows for the generation of sustained and gradual changes that can lead to greater institutionalization of gender equality (Escobar and Cook, 2022). In the chapter by Alicia Frohman, "La igualdad de género en las políticas de comercio internacional" ("Gender equality in international trade policies"), the relevance of the gender perspective and its non-neutrality in trade issues is addressed.

If, as we noted, research on the participation and influence of women in the formulation and implementation of Chilean foreign policy has been scarce, women's invisibility in trade policy, despite their importance in the country's foreign affairs concerns, is evident. Confirmation of the scarcity of studies on the matter reveals some field rich for research, since according to the specialized literature on the analysis of foreign policy in general (McGlen & Sarkees, 2018). Moreover, research on the impact of women as decision-makers in international affairs, in particular, has been especially limited (Bashevkin, 2014). Some works have concerned themselves with identifying the number of women in positions of power in institutions, rather than their effects and influence, especially in Western developed countries (Manzano, 2001; McGlen & Sarkees, 2018; Peterson & Runyan, 1999). We propose two levels of analysis at which women can be recognized as negotiators: first, their participation and the entry barriers they have faced; second, whether women negotiators make any difference to outcomes in PTAs or at the multilateral level.

#### BARRIERS FACED BY WOMEN NEGOTIATORS

The barriers encountered by women in integrating into working life in general have been a topic of study (UNCTAD, 2015). Each day is more clear that it is not important only the gap in numerical representation, but it lends to how gender structures and permeates diplomatic institutions, rules, norms, and practices. Institutions (formal and informal) are structured by gender conceptions. As such, institutions contain collections of interrelated rules and routines that define appropriate actions in terms of relationships between roles and situations). Gender thus conceived helps shape the expectations and practices of individuals into relatively stable and predictable patterns.

Of particular interest for our study, Mesa and Gómez (2009) point out that the assumption of managerial positions and responsibilities continues to be a controversial field, in which women try to forge a path with difficulties that go beyond labour relations and involve personal, psychological and family considerations, including factors unique to the woman herself. They note that negotiation has historically been considered a male profession and is subject to discrimination in some parts of the globe, such as in the Arab world or in Japanese culture. Likewise, they argue that “women negotiators express experiences of inequalities in two senses: on the one hand, undervaluation or even rejection of negotiation schemes presented by women; and on the other, self-imposed limitations of the woman herself when assuming her role ”(p.35). Kray, L & Kennedy, J. (2017) explore why the challenges women face remain so poorly understood and why negative stereotypes persist, with female strengths often being overlooked or seriously underrated. Various studies show that men tend to end up in more prestigious positions and assignments (e.g., Studlar and Moncrief 1999; Hawkesworth 2003).

Men and women are not simply differentiated, in other words, but also ranked hierarchically. Delving further, Lombana (2007) underlines the importance of including gender balance both in the economic models used to assess the impact on trade of economic integration as well as in the policies to be applied in integration schemes. Pursuing this, she points out that “the gender variable is not neutral and that its effects can establish important changes in economic policy and vice versa” (p. 10).

## INFLUENCE OF WOMEN IN NEGOTIATIONS

Traditionally, foreign policy analysis has alternated between a focus on internal factors that affect decision-making such as public opinion or the public sector, and a concern with the dynamics of the international system. Less frequent has been study of the comparative influence of men and women in the foreign policy debate, a study unable to escape the question of whether or not gender has any effect on the matter (Tickner, 2001). Duerst-Lahti (2008) point out that there are noticeable contrasts in the participation of men and women especially in the areas of security and defense, the supposition being that women may be more inclined to peace and the reduction of military spending, as well as to feminist issues and their inclusion in policy agendas (Koch & Fulton, 2011; Tickner, 2001). Or, that women tend to define less aggressive strategies in terms of peace, but to be more competitive and less risk-averse when economic issues are involved (Smith, 2020). In sum, the research aims to answer if women have had different priorities, political preferences, and behaviours during negotiations or in the foreign service compared to their male colleagues (McGlen and Sarkees 1991, 1993, and 2001; Bahsevkina 2014). Bahsevkina (2014) has noted a difference in the issues women prioritize: more related to gender issues and cooperation with the global south. Although one line of research maintains that the orientation of foreign policy decisions is gender-linked, some authors conclude that women have not necessarily been transformative leaders eager to promote a more feminist, innovative and disruptive agenda (D'Aoust, 2012; D'Amico & Beckman, 1995; Genovese, 1993). Given these differences of viewpoint, it is important to better understand the role of women in trade policy as part of foreign policy.

Despite the academic interest in gender and diplomacy, and the available literature on negotiators' behavior and its effects on negotiations, generally according to gender (Kray, L & Kennedy, J., 2017), there is little research available that traces and analyzes where women are located in the international negotiation process; and even less in trade agreements negotiation. As far as Chile is concerned, there is no such research. Most studies on the role of women and gender are mainly limited to the incorporation of gender provisions in FTAs and how women affect them (Bahri, 2020). This followed from the inclusion of these issues in the international agenda after the publication by the Commonwealth secretariat of the Gender and Trade Action Guide in 2007 led to the WTO's Joint Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment, published in 2017 in congruence with the UN's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5. In 1975, Rubin and Brown carried out the first analysis of gender in a negotiation, highlighting that female behavior is, on occasions, more inclusive than male; furthermore, that the former is less predictable and more reactive to the behavior of the other party than the latter (Rubin and Brown, 1975). In line with this, Cubillo et al (2014) seek to understand negotiating behavior in order to identify whether gender determines a distributive or inclusive manner of proceeding, focusing on the process from the subjects' first decision to their impact on the results of the negotiation. Although they find that gender is a variable that indeed influences the conduct of a negotiation, they conclude that it does not support a solely distributive or inclusive approach, but that this changes throughout the negotiation process, since most women start with decisions that favour their individual benefit. For Sánchez (2010) there are socially prescribed behaviours according to which women are more inclusive than men. The results of Eckel et al's research (2008) showed that, in general, women

tended to be less likely not to reach an agreement than men. Some authors argue that no significant differences have been found between negotiations made by men and women, although as Svedberg (2018) points out, institutional gender norms about appropriate “male” and “female” behavior may channel women in one direction and men in another in the diplomatic arena. Studies like that by Saorín & Canet (2006) analyze the effect of gender differences and the behaviours arising from them on the results of negotiation processes, while controlling for the influence of the context in which the negotiation process takes place, and with a specific focus on cooperation agreements. They emphasize that gender differences do significantly influence the negotiating behavior of the participating parties, as well as the result obtained in reaching agreements. Kolb and Coolidge (1991) argue that, in negotiations, women tend to relate more to others, while Florea et al. (2003: 230) agree that they provide a personalized component of empathy that is often underestimated in male-dominated environments. “Male” characteristics typically include assertiveness, competence, and dominance, while “female” characteristics involve cooperation and inclusiveness (Babcock and Laschever 2003; Aggestam 2018). Research by Mesa and Gómez (2009) shows significant differences in how the women in their sample interpret the role of negotiators, between those who see no relationship between gender and negotiation, those who perceive the gender-negotiation relationship as favourable to them, and those who perceive it as disadvantageous. Essentially, it is in these terms that the Chilean experience should be understood. From the literature, it is not evident that we should assume any distinct gender behavior in negotiations, but the existence of barriers in women’s participation and the preference for the positioning of some issues in preference to others, are indeed evident.

## THE CHILEAN CASE: ADVANCES AND SOME REFLECTIONS

This research aims for an understanding that goes beyond the case of the first Chilean woman in the post of minister of foreign affairs, Soledad Alvear, and of Michele Bachelet as president, by considering those women who have served in important positions in trade negotiations as chief negotiators, whether of agreements, of chapters of agreements, or as part of negotiating teams.

The Andrés Bello Diplomatic Academy (ACADE) was created by decree in 1954 and, although, in strictly legal terms, there has never been any impediment for women to enter the Chilean Foreign Service, almost all current career women ambassadors entered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Minrel) only since the mid or late 1980s (Aguirre and Covarrubias, 2022).

With the return to democracy in Chile, women emerged gradually in leadership positions in technical areas, particularly in the Directorate of International Economic Relations (DIRECON, today's Subrei) and the Directorate of Borders and Limits (DIFROL). Although the participation of women in important decision-making positions was low during the 1990s, the ambassadors Silvia Balbontín (Chile's first career ambassador), Carmen Luz Guarda (ambassador to the WTO) and Moy de Tohá were an exception. In the government of Eduardo Frei (1994-2000), female political ambassadors were appointed, such as Graciela Fernández as Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) negotiator in Singapore. As mentioned already, a milestone was the appointment in 2000 by President Ricardo Lagos (2000-2006) of Soledad Alvear as minister of foreign affairs, whose influence has been studied (Muñoz, 2010). Subsequently, the government

of Michelle Bachelet (2006-2010) sought to send a signal with her announcement of a cabinet with gender parity and produced changes in terms of gender equality, but evidently not in international affairs. In 2017, during her second term (2014-2018), a Gender Equity Plan was launched, which sought to reduce the gaps between men and women. During this period, Ambassador María del Carmen Domínguez made significant efforts to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. During the first term of Sebastián Piñera (2010-2014), the only directorates of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs led by a woman were the National Directorate of Borders and Limits (Difrol), headed by Ambassador María Teresa Infante, and the Directorate of International Economic Relations. (DIRECON), today an Undersecretariat, led by Ana Novik. In Piñera's second government (2018-2022), a woman, Ambassador Carolina Valdivia, was appointed for the first time to be undersecretary at the Ministry, in whose period of office gender chapters have been included in the negotiation of second and third generation Trade Agreements, and the Roadmap for the economic empowerment of women in the Pacific Alliance 2020-2030.

In Chile, the inclusion of women has steadily increased, as well as the search for instruments to enable them to reach decision-making positions. As mentioned, Chile has been a pioneer in the inclusion of the gender issue in many of its PTAs, in the Global Trade and Gender Arrangement, the Pacific Alliance and APEC. Although they have aspects that remain highly controversial, such as the absence of binding commitments, they have started a trend that, as in environmental and labour matters, can make a problem more visible. In 2016, the Gender Department was created in DIRECON headed by a woman; later, this division was transformed into the Department of Inclusive Trade, under

Marcela Otero. Its objective has been to promote international trade that addresses the issues of gender, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), and native peoples in international trade.

In the WTO, two women have been appointed to represent Chile. The first was Carmen Luz Guarda, during the first years of democracy. The second, Ambassador Sofia Boza, who took over as representative in 2022, has had a high percentage of women in negotiating positions, such as Ana Novik, Olivia Cook, Marcela Otero, and others.

As far as chief negotiators in the top position are concerned, only one woman has held the position of Director of DIRECON, Paulina Nazal, who has had a long career and was one of the first women to negotiate property-related issues.

Chile has been involved in 33 negotiations up to 2023. When reviewing in greater detail, given that the negotiating teams have members recurring, the records show that there are actually 78 women and 97 men who they have continually composed these working groups. This shows that it is greater the number of men who have negotiated in Chile, and that the participation of these actors is more repetitive posts.

Until 2007, female participation did not exceed 40% in any negotiating team and was even null in the negotiations of the P4 Agreement and with Panama, carried out in 2006 and 2008 respectively. However, as of 2008, the first agreement negotiated with parity entered into force, the Economic Complementarity Agreement between Chile and Cuba (ACE 42), which was signed in 1999. After this, there are 11 agreements in which the participation of women negotiators exceeds 40%, marking a turning point for the integration of

women in the negotiating field. An event of this nature has only happened again in 2021, with the entry into force of the Trade Integration Agreement with Ecuador, which was also negotiated by an equal number of women and men.

In this regard, the Global Gap Report of the World Economic Forum (2022) places Chile in position 105 out of 146 countries with greater inequality in this topic. Along these lines, although the figures show that women have gained access to positions within trade policy, there has been the tendency to prioritize male participation in team building. In this way, the main obstacle would no longer be their incorporation into this labour field as the first step, but rather narrowing this gap on the road to parity.

The disparity in the negotiating teams has been remarkable over the years. Specific, 81% of these have been made up mostly of men, while only 13% of them are made up of a higher percentage of women. Now, although it still holds This difference has undergone changes, especially during the last 15 years.

It is important to note that throughout these 33 trade agreements, heads of leadership have been iterated, so that in reality only 14 people have been heads of negotiation for these trade agreements. Of the above, it is recorded that 13 of these people have been men, while only one head of negotiation has been a woman, which corresponds to Paulina Nazal.

According to the Inter-American Development Bank (2022) in Latin America and the Caribbean, although women represent 52% of the public sector workforce, they have less presence in leadership positions. In the 15 countries analysed -including Chile-, women hold only 23.6% of level one posi-

tions in the hierarchy, equivalent to a minister, compared to 44.2% who reach level four position, equivalent to director.

Among the results obtained on negotiators' perceptions, barriers identified have included:

i) The view that women's presence was always considered more challenging due to the frequency of travel and family complexities and care responsibilities. This helps as an argument not to appoint them in high decision positions in negotiations.

ii) Resistance to the inclusion of women in groups that for a long time were male in composition, leading to them having to face sectarian behaviour and the groups' own dynamics, particularly in customs-related matters. This negotiation in the beginning where highly related to travelling and been away from home long periods of time.

iii) In terms of issues, in that women were initially more involved in issues other than goods (the latter being a masculinized world), and for this reason women at this early stage featured much more in matters such as services, or environmental issues—initially considered of lesser importance.

iv) The traditional glossing over of their participation, and their greater difficulty in getting their opinions noticed were identified by some of the interviewees.

Regarding their influence or differences in their behavior, the perception was: i) that they establish longer-term rela-

tionships, which generally lead them not to leave a negotiation without reaching an agreement; ii) that they are more creative and flexible in finding solutions, iii) that they propose new topics such as the chapters on gender issues.

On the WTO, there was a duality: the perception of a more inclusive environment for women in terms of their participation, but not in the inclusion of gender issues in the negotiations.

Fortunately, in Chile the teams have had some continuity, evidently a sign of the erosion of some of the barriers, while participation criteria increasingly take account of the gender perspective.

## CONCLUSION

This article presented the first findings of a project that aims to research on women participation in trade negotiation in different dimensions: i) the identification of barriers found by women in trade negotiation, ii) the position levels in which women were appointed and iii) the influence in those negotiations. The case of Chile as one of the countries with more preferential trade agreements in the world becomes relevant to have more information that could be helpful to close the gap in research. Also, it might be useful to develop public policy in further trade negotiations. The data has been not easy to find and some of the interviews are still in the process. The gender focus has gone positioning itself increasingly in trade policy, both in the WTO as in agreements commercial.

Some barriers have been identified by the interviewees, such as the perception that by having to do more unpaid work and maternity, or sectarian behaviours, they are less

mentioned in the positions. Of particular interest is the greater presence of women in some issues, such as negotiations on services, which must be deepened.

The vertical segregation observed in Chile's trade negotiations, show an increase in the entry of women as economic negotiators but a decrease correlation with their participation as negotiation heads, reflects a gender gap persistent in the workplace and in decision-making. The growing participation of women as economic negotiators shows positive progress in gender inclusion in this field and shows that opportunities are being given for more women to enter the roles related to trade and international negotiations. However, the fact that there is a significant difference between the percentage of women negotiators (40%) and that of women negotiating managers (10%) indicates that there are barriers and obstacles that limit the promotion and representation of women in leadership positions.

The foreign feminist policy is one of the objectives of Chile, alone with the increasing signature of Gender and Trade chapters in its agreements and closing the participation gap between man and women in public policy decision making. For this reason, further investigation is needed in the different edges of foreign policy.

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