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# Madam Ambassador: A Statistical Comparison of Female Ambassadors across the U.S., German, and EU Foreign Services

Laura Schiemichen



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A Statistical Comparison of Female Ambassadors  
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**Laura Schiemichen**

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## About the Author

Laura Schiemichen graduated from the College of Europe and The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy (Tufts University) in 2019 with a joint Master of Arts in Transatlantic Affairs (Benjamin Franklin Class). She recently worked with the U.S. Department of Commerce at the U.S. Mission to the EU and holds previous positions with Compass Lexecon, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and the European Parliament. She is a dual German-U.S. national and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Sociology from Wellesley College. This paper is based on her Master's thesis, which received the Jan Olaf Hausotter Memorial Prize for an outstanding thesis on transatlantic affairs.

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Dijver 11 | BE-8000 Bruges, Belgium | Tel. +32 (0)50 477 251 | Fax +32 (0)50 477 250 |  
E-mail [ird.info@coleurope.eu](mailto:ird.info@coleurope.eu) | [www.coleurope.eu/ird](http://www.coleurope.eu/ird)

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## Abstract

Since the end of the Cold War, transatlantic partners have championed enlightenment principles and progressive values around the world, including gender equality. The extent to which the actors tasked with spreading these fundamental values also embody them within their own organizations – in this case within the diplomatic profession – is the focus of this research. This paper examines how women’s representation at the ambassadorial level has changed from 1990 to 2018 across the foreign services of the U.S., Germany, and the European Union (EU). A dataset constructed especially for this study compares: (1) the numbers of female ambassadors over time, (2) the ‘types’ of posts they are sent to, and (3) recruitment pipelines and training, including special characteristics like political appointments in the U.S. and different origins of EU ambassadors. The results show that the U.S. foreign service peaks at 40% women’s representation in 2017, the EU at 22% in 2014, and Germany only at 14.5% in 2018. Females disproportionately serve in small African nations, multilateral organizations, and former Soviet states. Female U.S. ambassadors are more likely to come from the career track, while political appointees are overwhelmingly male, at a ratio of 4:1. In Europe, two-thirds of female ambassadors previously worked at the European Commission and one-third in their national foreign service, while founding Member States – especially France, Germany, and Italy – are dominant. Interviews with seasoned diplomats help illuminate and contextualize the underlying causes that potentially drive these trends, including policy, historical, or cultural factors. Looking towards the future, this work provides a small, yet important building block in rooting the concept of gender equality firmly within the success strategy of each diplomatic corps. A future generation of foreign policy leaders depends on it.

## Gender Equality as a Value in the Transatlantic Relationship

Since the end of the Cold War, transatlantic partners have championed enlightenment principles and progressive values around the world, including gender equality. This has materialized to a great extent in foreign policy, where prominent women like Hillary Clinton, Condoleezza Rice, Madeleine Albright, Federica Mogherini, and Catherine Ashton have led diplomat corps of key powers on both sides of the Atlantic. However, U.S.-European relations have become increasingly threatened, with the advancement of these fundamental values stunted at the hands of divisive actors. It is thus a critical time for women to fill positions of power, especially in the external representation of the U.S. and Europe abroad.

In 2018, only fifteen percent of the world's ambassadors were women.<sup>1</sup> Numerous challenges have limited the entry and participation of women in the foreign service, including explicit policies such as the requirement to leave the foreign service upon marrying (upheld in the U.S. until 1972),<sup>2</sup> as well as implicit attitudes that "women could not keep secrets, faced physical risk in foreign postings, were unable to network effectively given restrictions on access to elite clubs in many locations and relied too heavily on emotions to function in a cerebral and rational field of endeavor."<sup>3</sup> In 1976, political scientist Robert Putnam put forward the 'law of increasing disproportion,' arguing that numbers of women decrease with "each step towards the apex of power."<sup>4</sup> Fast forward to 2018, an investigation done by *Die Zeit* sent ripples through Germany when it found that there are more men named 'Hans' in senior levels of government than there are women, with the foreign ministry in second-to-last place.<sup>5</sup> Why is this case? What

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<sup>1</sup> Aggestam, Karin and Towns, Ann, "Introduction: The Study of Gender, Diplomacy and Negotiation," in Aggestam, Karin and Towns, Ann (eds.), *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation*, Cham, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Shoemaker, Jolynn and Park, Jennifer, *Progress Report on Women in Peace & Security Careers: U.S. Executive Branch*, Women in International Security, 2010, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> Good, Barbara, "Women in the Foreign Service: A Quiet Revolution," *Foreign Service Journal*, January/February, 1981, p. 47.

<sup>4</sup> Putnam, Robert, *The Comparative Study of Political Elites*, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1976, p. 33.

<sup>5</sup> Biermann, Kai et al., "Die Hans-Bremse," *Die Zeit*, October 8, 2018.

explains the disproportionate representation of men in the diplomatic profession? Is the source of these differences “innate, socially constructed, lasting, or temporary”?<sup>6</sup>

The concept of ‘gender mainstreaming’ – the idea that “considerations of gender, both who is at the table and how policies affect people of different genders”<sup>7</sup> – has more recently grounded questions of equal representation into the policymaking mainstream. Scholarly contributions have rightly looked beyond filling a quota and, rather, explored how the presence of women adds new value. Importantly, effective leadership, and effective diplomacy, must come at the hands of a diverse and inclusive set of individuals. The goal should not be to elevate one gender above the other, as Madeleine Albright explains: “[more women at the table] doesn’t mean that the whole world would be better off if it were totally run by women. If you think that, you’ve forgotten high school.”<sup>8</sup>

However, there have been – and are still – obvious constraints that have hindered women’s participation in the diplomatic profession, which have little to do with women’s abilities and everything to do with access and opportunity. It makes sense that a country’s foreign service mirror 50% of its population. Still, more data-driven evidence is needed to analyze whether this is the case.

A statistical comparison across three foreign services enables a concrete assessment of this premise within the transatlantic alliance over the last thirty years. As the personification of Western ideals like capitalism, democracy, and human rights around the world, it is pertinent to ask whether the actors tasked with spreading transatlantic values also embody them within their own organizations. The U.S., German, and European Union (EU) foreign services present interesting case studies in this regard. All three have the financial means to dispatch substantial numbers of ambassadors – often more than 140 filled postings worldwide – allowing for variation in the variables under study. The U.S. State Department – with the most resources and highest number of diplomats overseas (9,450)<sup>9</sup> – is, uniquely, the only diplomatic corps in the world to employ ambassadors from outside its foreign service: political appointees, often with celebrity status, access to the

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<sup>6</sup> McGlen, Nancy and Sarkees, Meredith Reid, *Women in Foreign Policy: The Insiders*, London, Routledge, 1993, p. 14.

<sup>7</sup> Hurlburt, Heather, Weingarten, Elizabeth, and Souris, Elena, *National Security: What We Talk About When We Talk About Gender*, New America, December 11, 2018, p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> Albright, Madeleine, “On Being a Woman and a Diplomat,” *TED Talk*, video, December 2010.

<sup>9</sup> “Department of State Overview,” AllGov Website, and “Workforce Statistics - Human Resources Fact Sheet as of 9/30/18,” Bureau of Human Resources, Department of State.

President, and professional backgrounds outside of foreign policy, receive varying degrees of formal diplomatic training; at times, their primary distinguishing characteristic is that they donated large sums of money to the President's campaign, despite the Foreign Service Act of 1980 prohibiting campaign contributions as a factor in the appointment process.<sup>10</sup> Today's German Federal Foreign Office, or Auswärtiges Amt (AA), in contrast employs only career diplomats and sends roughly one-third the number of diplomats overseas (3,111).<sup>11</sup> In earlier centuries, it was dominated by the aristocratic upper-class, explained by a policy that required a candidate to demonstrate a university degree and private income of up to 15,000 marks/year in order to join (a policy continued until 1918).<sup>12</sup> By comparison, the European External Action Service (EEAS) – founded in 2011 under the Lisbon Treaty – recruits its diplomats from all twenty-eight EU Member States and is tasked with “strengthening the EU on the global stage, giving it more profile, and enabling it to project its interests and values more efficiently.”<sup>13</sup> The smallest amongst the three (2,077 diplomats overseas),<sup>14</sup> the EEAS aims to appoint 40% female Heads-of-Mission.<sup>15</sup> Collectively, these three services form a rather direct manifestation of the transatlantic relationship in practice.

In sum, this research explores the question: How, from 1990 to 2018, has women's representation at the ambassadorial level changed across the U.S., German, and EU foreign services?

A dataset constructed especially for this study examines: 1) the numbers of female ambassadors over time, 2) the ‘types’ of posts they are sent to, and 3) recruitment pipelines and training, including special characteristics like political appointments in the U.S. and different origins of EU ambassadors. The results show that the 50% needed to

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<sup>10</sup> United States Foreign Service Act of 1980, *U.S. House of Representatives*.

<sup>11</sup> “The Foreign Service – staff,” Website of the Federal Foreign Office.

<sup>12</sup> Röhl, John, *The Kaiser and His Court: Wilhelm II and the Government of Germany*, translated by Cole, Terence, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 151.

<sup>13</sup> European Union, “Treaty of Lisbon: Amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing the European Community,” *Official Journal of the European Union*, C306/1, December 17, 2007, art. 27(3) TEU, and Council of the European Union, “Council Decision establishing the organization and functioning of the European External Action Service,” *Official Journal of the European Union*, L201/30, July 26, 2010.

<sup>14</sup> This excludes the European Commission staff abroad. European External Action Service, *2017 Annual Activity Report*, July 11, 2018, pg. 5.

<sup>15</sup> Novotná, Tereza, “Women in the EEAS and EU Delegations: Another Post-Westphalia Change?”, in Spence, David and Jozef, Bátor (eds.), *The European External Action Service: European Diplomacy Post-Westphalia*, Cham, Palgrave, 2015, p. 429.

mirror society are still not a reality: the U.S. peaks at 40% female ambassadors in 2017, the EU at 22% in 2014, and Germany, despite having more filled postings worldwide during all years, lagging far behind at 14.5% in 2018. Across all three foreign services, females disproportionately serve in small African nations, multilateral organizations, and former-Soviet states (particularly during the early 1990s). The absence of prestigious postings is equally telling: the lowest numbers of female ambassadors have served in Washington, Tokyo, Tel Aviv, Moscow, and Beijing (if at all). Instead, it is peculiar that a powerful nation like the U.S. most frequently sends female ambassadors to Micronesia, the #1 post. A deeper look into the professional backgrounds of U.S. ambassadors reveals that women are more likely to come from the career track, with the rate of female career ambassadors steadily increasing over time, while the rate of male career ambassadors decreases. Meanwhile, political appointee ambassadors remain overwhelmingly male, at a ratio of 4:1. Since the establishment of the EEAS, two-thirds of female EU ambassadors have come from the European Commission and one-third from national foreign services. Unlike male EU ambassadors, it is very uncommon for women to begin their careers as national diplomats and then progress to the Commission, before heading to the EEAS. Examining the nationalities of female EU ambassadors reveals that the founding Member States – especially France, Germany, and Italy – are dominant.

While existing research has focused on one foreign service over a limited period of time, or various foreign services over one year, none have attempted both (albeit limited to the ambassadorial level). The time-intensive nature of the data collection adds particular value, as it presents a combination of information never before examined. The data, though easily accessible for the U.S. and EU foreign services, was particularly difficult in the case of Germany: while the AA website provided information about current ambassadors, further contact with the Political Archives revealed that, surprisingly, no records on past ambassadorships are kept. With the help of various libraries across Germany, access to twenty-seven annual directories was made possible. As such, the significance of this study is the contextualization of a story that otherwise would not be grounded in quantitative evidence.



The source of the data is the U.S. Office of the Historian,<sup>16</sup> EU Who Is Who Archives,<sup>17</sup> and the 'Verzeichnisse der Vertretungen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland im Ausland.'<sup>18</sup> It should be noted that Heads of European Commission Delegations (managed by DG RELEX) prior to 2011 are assumed to be equivalent to EU Heads of Delegations under the EEAS. Within the dataset, all ambassadors to all filled postings worldwide (bilateral and multilateral) are listed annually.<sup>19</sup> In the analysis, percentages are used to maintain comparability of the data across years and account for openings/closures of embassies. The list of countries is based on the Member States of the United Nations (UN) and excludes actors like Kosovo and the Holy See.<sup>20</sup> In addition to names and genders, the dataset makes note of special characteristics, including political appointee versus career ambassadors in the U.S., as well as the different origins of EU ambassadors (Member States, European Commission, Council of the EU).<sup>21</sup>

Interviews conducted with male and female diplomats contextualize the data findings through personal anecdotes.<sup>22</sup> The underlying causes potentially driving these trends – from institutionalized policies, to political, cultural, and historical factors – are explored. Importantly, one can only speculate upon these causes and must exercise caution to explain them definitively. Questions facilitating this section include: What were the policy changes that opened the door to increased female participation? How have specific events affected the prevalence of female ambassadors? Are recruitment

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<sup>16</sup> U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, *Chief of Mission by Country, 1990-2018*.

<sup>17</sup> EU Who Is Who, *Official Directories of the European Union, by Year, 1990-2018*. Though these Archives provided a starting point (for detailing names, years and postings served), ambassadors' nationalities and professional histories were discovered through a variety of Google searches, LinkedIn, and Facebook profiles.

<sup>18</sup> Auswärtiges Amt, *Verzeichnis der Vertretungen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland im Ausland, annually 1990-2017 (November)*.

<sup>19</sup> If a transition of ambassadors occurred in a given year, the ambassador serving for the majority of the year is counted. If a posting was vacant for the majority of the year, it is denoted as 'vacant.' Chargé d'Affaires or Special Representatives are not included. Non-resident ambassadors to multiple countries, such as the EU Ambassador to the Pacific, are only counted once annually. In the case of the Ambassador to Czechoslovakia prior to 1993, the entry is only counted once (given that the 2018 list of UN Member State countries separates entries for the Czech Republic and Slovakia).

<sup>20</sup> United Nations, *Member States A-Z*.

<sup>21</sup> For a sample of the dataset, see Schiemichen, Laura, *Madam Ambassador: A Statistical Comparison of Female Ambassadors across the U.S., German, and EU Foreign Services*, Master's thesis, College of Europe, Bruges, and The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Medford, April 2019.

<sup>22</sup> See bibliography for a list of the individuals spoken to.

mechanisms facilitating a consistent pipeline of young female talent? It is suggested that policy changes have been most influential historically, dominating and even determining the extent to which women had the opportunities to succeed. Still, it becomes clear that no policy, historical, or cultural event has held as much sway over a woman’s career as her personal decisions, which, in turn, are influenced by structural constraints.

Looking ahead, the upcoming section details the data findings through a series of graphs and tables (all produced by the author, unless stated otherwise), depicted along three parameters: numbers over time, ‘types’ of posts sent to, and recruitment pipelines and training. A subsequent discussion on the possible causes of women’s differential representation in the diplomatic profession follows. Finally, the paper ends with a one-page summary of the data findings, while the conclusion offers considerations for further research as well as policy recommendations.

### Numbers over Time

Comparing the percentage of female ambassadors over time provides a telling snapshot into how gender equality has developed across the three foreign services selected.

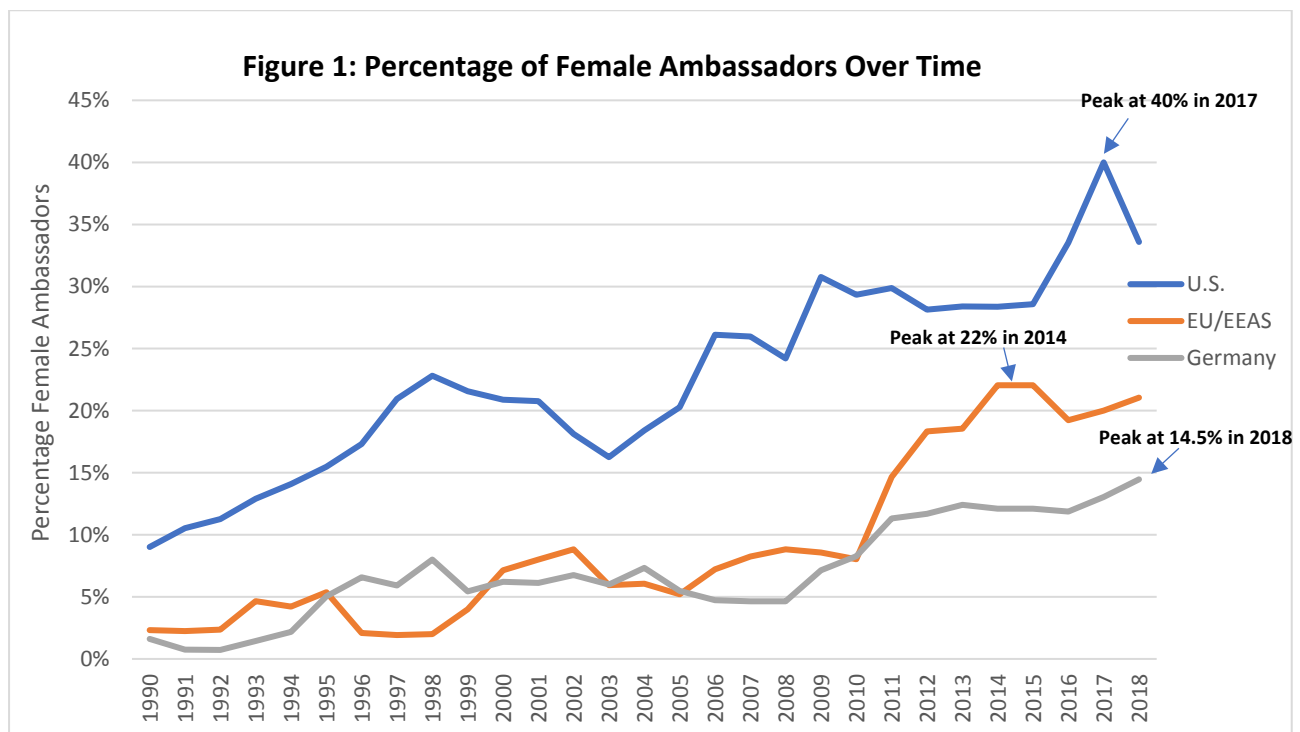


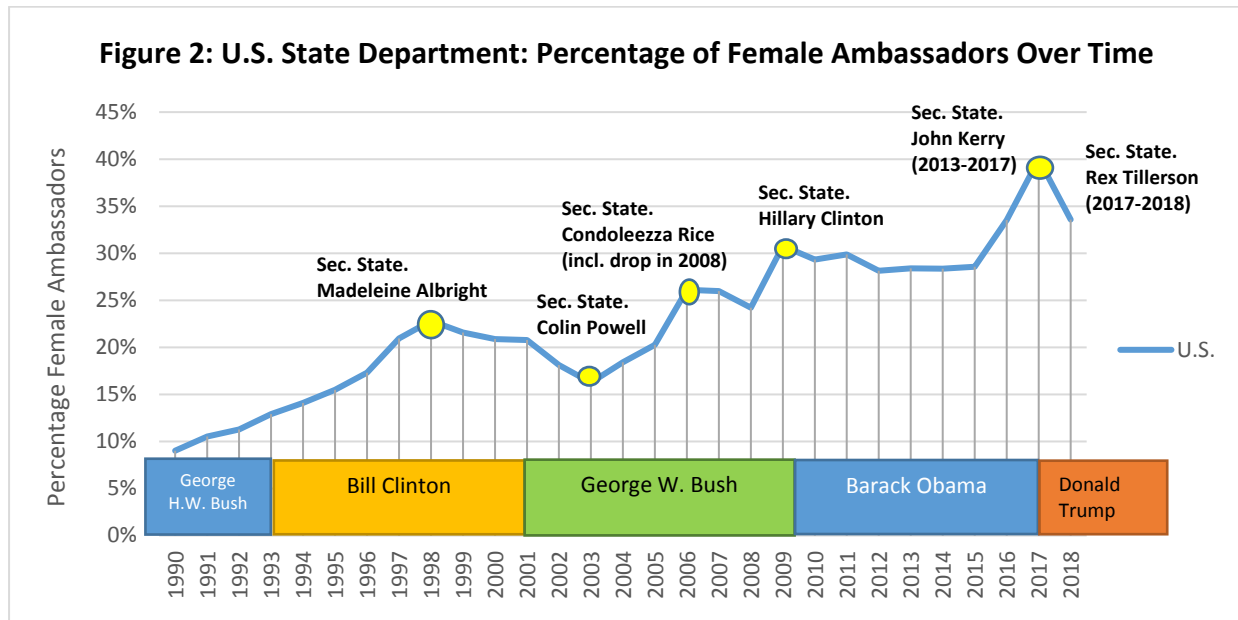
Figure 1 provides a glimpse into the last twenty-eight years. The most striking observation of all: Germany, despite having more filled postings than the other two foreign services (Table 1 below), has the weakest record of female ambassadors. In numerical terms, this means that Germany had only one or two female ambassadors in the early 1990s and rose to approximately 20 in the mid-2010s.

**Table 1: Filled posts by country and year**

Filled posts by year	United States	Germany	European Union
1990	122	124	86
2001	130	147	100
2010	150	157	112
2018	131	159	133

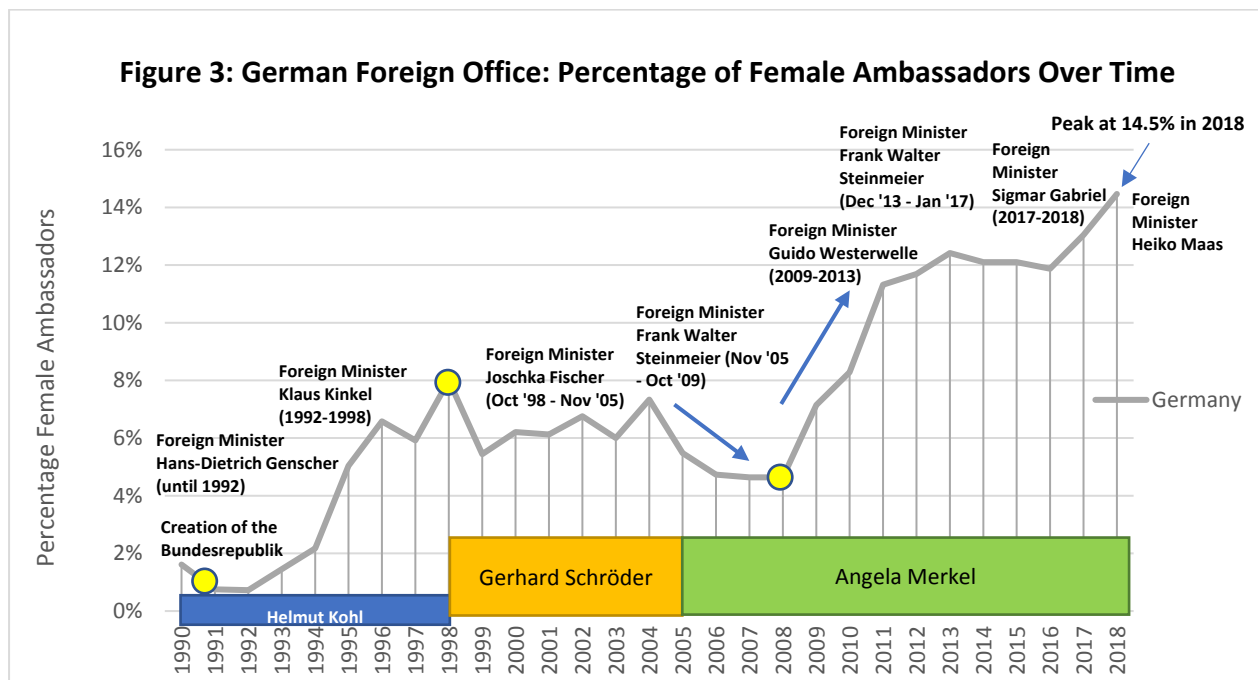
Also notable is that the three foreign services do not start at the same point, suggesting that the U.S. already had more female ambassadors relative to the other two foreign services prior to 1990.

Further examination of Heads of State and Foreign Ministers serving throughout these years, depicted in Figure 2, is also worthwhile:



An increase in the percentage of American female ambassadors seems to often be correlated with a female Secretary of State, as exemplified by Madeleine Albright, Condoleezza Rice, and Hillary Clinton. Indeed, the first peak under Albright was unsurprising for Barbara Bodine: "There were both push and pull factors during this time:

Madeleine made it clear she wanted more diversity in the senior ranks of the diplomatic corps, and that also meant women. At the same time, women who had begun their State Department careers in the 1970s (upon important policy changes that allowed more women to enter and advance in the career) were now ready and qualified to be named as ambassadors.”<sup>23</sup> Despite the highest overall peak correlated with a male Secretary, John Kerry, the lowest drop also coincides with a male, Colin Powell. As Bodine mentions, Powell’s gender may not be significant: “Powell sent me to Baghdad in 2003; he wasn’t at all against appointing women, but maybe he was up against the political appointments of George W. Bush.”<sup>24</sup> Commenting on Donald Trump’s term, Bodine said: “The crash in numbers of women in senior policy levels over the last two years – including ambassadors, but also in Washington – has been notable and may well reflect implicit bias of the Administration writ large, as well as senior leadership within State. The Secretary does set the corporate culture. There is no ‘pipeline’ factor at this stage. The women are there, experienced, and able to take on these positions. They have proven this over the decades since the 1990s.”<sup>25</sup>



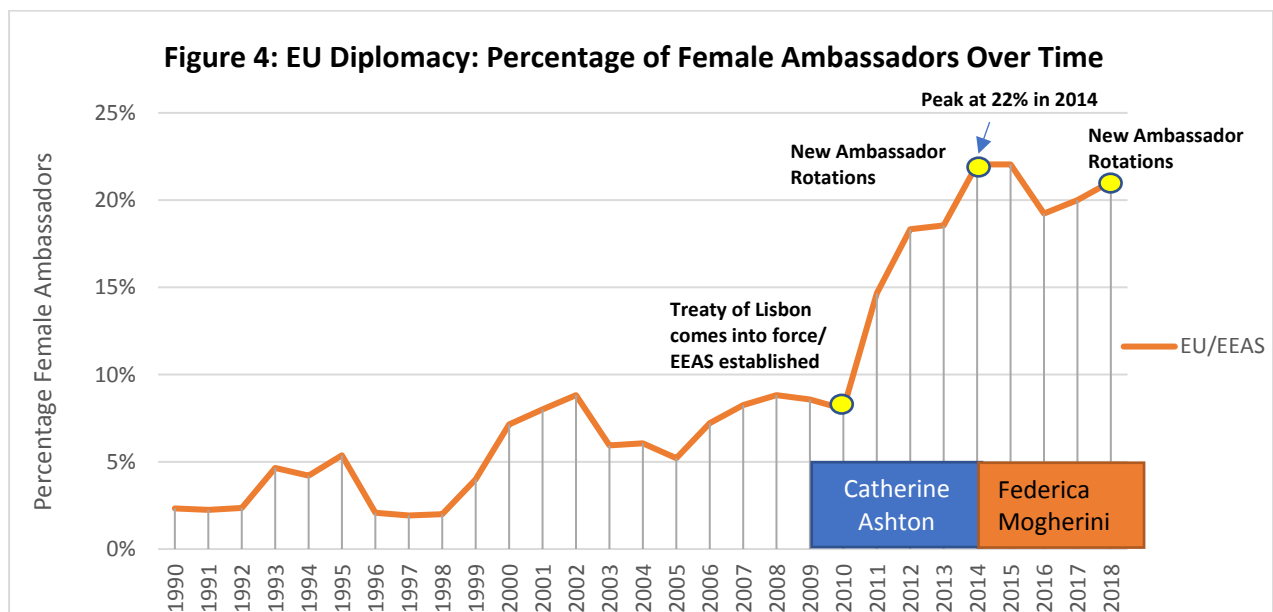
<sup>23</sup> Interview with Barbara Bodine, via telephone, December 11, 2018.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

Figure 3 above assesses the percentage of female ambassadors vis-à-vis political leadership over the same period. The years following German unification show female ambassadors nearly tending to zero. An optimistic and steady increase under Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel in the mid-1990s was followed by a period of stagnation during Joschka Fischer’s term and eventual drop under Frank Walter Steinmeier in 2008. The stark increase in female ambassadors following Steinmeier’s departure, and the entrance of Guido Westerwelle as Foreign Minister, is worth noting (especially considering the returned stagnation upon Steinmeier’s second term in late 2013). Klaus Scharioth commented on these results:

“Your numbers do not surprise me, since the AA took very few women into the highest service until the mid-80s (assuming you become ambassador only after approximately 25 years). In the last 15 years, however, the proportion of women admitted has remained constant between 40-50%, with the result that the proportion of ambassadors is also expected to increase steadily over the next 15 years. After all, 4 out of 10 Department Heads (including the most significant: Political Director) and some key embassies (Washington, Tokyo, Tel Aviv) are headed by women, unlike the U.S. and the EEAS.”<sup>26</sup>



Looking towards the EEAS in Figure 4 above, the stark increase in the percentage of female ambassadors immediately following the establishment of the EEAS is notable. Ambassador rotations (happening every four years in the post-Lisbon era, most recently

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Klaus Scharioth, via telephone, December 19, 2018.

in 2014 and 2018) seemed to increase female representation and contrast to the peculiar drop in 2016. These rotations encouraged new applicants: “Before Lisbon, you had Commission staff abroad for 20 years without once coming back to Headquarters; no woman could manage that with family life. Now, you have not only more turnover, but also the requirement to return to Brussels after two consecutive terms.”<sup>27</sup> In comparing Federica Mogherini to Catherine Ashton’s term, it seems that Mogherini has not continued Ashton’s trend of hiring as many female ambassadors. However, it may be too early to tell what the drivers of this evolution really are.

### **‘Types’ of Posts Sent to**

Examining ‘types’ of posts stems from the motivation to quantitatively assess the degree of meaningful power a female ambassador holds. For example, a progress report citing 50% female ambassadors is not a desirable outcome if the underlying picture shows that 100% of women serve in low-stakes postings while 0% serve in strategically critical posts. Where a woman serves is unfortunately a crucial step overlooked by Human Resources reports or Gender Action Plans, which only assess total percentages and fail to extrapolate more nuanced, underlying factors.

The ‘top ten’ posts with the highest percentages of female ambassadors over the last twenty-eight years is depicted in Table 2 below. In an attempt to quantify meaningful time spent at post, the highest number of years a posting was occupied by a woman is also examined:

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<sup>27</sup> Interview with Stella Zervoudaki, via telephone, December 21, 2018.

Table 2: Top ten posts with highest percentages of female ambassadors, 1990-2018

**U.S.**

Country	Highest % Female Ambassadors	Total # Ambassadors	Total # Females	Total # Career Ambassadors	Total # Career Females
Micronesia	67%	9	6	7	4
Kyrgyzstan	67%	9	6	9	6
South Sudan	67%	3	2	2	1
UNESCO	67%	3	2	0	0
Burundi	67%	9	6	7	5
Malta	63%	8	5	2	2
Niger	60%	10	6	10	6
Mauritius	60%	5	3	3	2
Timor-Leste	60%	5	3	4	3
Ecuador	56%	9	5	8	5

**U.S.**

Country	Years with Female Amb. from 1990-2018	# of Female Ambassadors (out of total)
Burundi	18	6/9
Micronesia	17	6/9
Niger	17	6/10
Kyrgyzstan	16	6/9
Malta	16	5/8
El Salvador	15	4/8
UN - New York	14	4/11
Benin	14	5/10
Papua New Guinea	13	4/9
Ecuador	13	5/9

**Germany**

Country	Highest % Female Ambassadors	Total # Amb.	Total # Females
Ethiopia	44%	9	4
Senegal	44%	9	4
FYROM	44%	9	4
Republic of Moldova	38%	8	3
Georgia	38%	8	3
OPCW	33%	3	1
Dominican Republic	33%	9	3
Armenia	29%	7	2
Kyrgyzstan	25%	8	2
Nicaragua	25%	8	2

**Germany**

Country	Years with Female Amb. 1990-2018	# of Female Amb. (out of total)
Ethiopia	15	4/9
Dominican Republic	11	3/9
FYROM	11	4/10
Senegal	10	4/9
Bulgaria	8	2/9
Kenya	8	2/9
Nicaragua	8	2/8
Niger	8	2/8
Republic of Moldova	8	3/8
Slovakia	8	2/9

**EU**

Country	Highest % Female Ambassadors	Total # Amb.	Total # Females*	Country	Training
Ecuador	100%	1	1	BE	COM
San Marino	100%	1	1	FR	COM
Belarus	100%	2	2	LV, DE	MS (2)
Nepal	67%	3	2	NL, IE	COM (2)
Yemen	67%	3	2	DE, ES	COM (2)
Libya	67%	3	2	BG, DE	MS, COM
Guatemala	50%	2	1	GR	COM
Liberia	50%	4	2	EE, FR	MS, COM
Kyrgyzstan	50%	2	1	BE	COM
Colombia	38%	8	3	NL, PT, ES	MS (2), COM

**EU**

Country	Years with Female Amb. 1990-2018	# of Female Amb. (out of total)
Holy See, Order of Malta, FAO, San Marino	11	2/6
OECD/UNESCO	9	2/7
Benin	8	2/9
Canada	8	2/8
Chad	8	2/8
Congo	8	2/8
Ethiopia	8	2/9
India	8	2/8
Lebanon	8	2/6
Belarus	7	2/2

\*Percentages are misleading in the EU's case, given recent openings of Delegations (i.e. Ecuador had, until 2017, been under the accreditation of the EU Delegation in Colombia; it was therefore only counted independently after 2017). Years served in a posting is a more revealing indicator here.



The comparative nature of this study becomes particularly valuable in the context of postings served. The prevalent representation of female ambassadors in small, African nations like South Sudan, Burundi, Niger, Ethiopia, Senegal, Benin, Chad, Congo, and Kenya across all three services is interesting. Multilateral postings such as UNESCO, OECD, UN (New York), and OPCW (Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons) also have their fair share of female representation. Surprisingly, multiple former Soviet states appear, such as Kyrgyzstan, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia, Moldova, former Yugoslavia (Macedonia), Bulgaria, and Slovakia. In fact, Kyrgyzstan is represented in the top-10 lists for all three foreign services. The postings not on the list are equally telling, including: Washington, Tokyo, Tel Aviv, Moscow, and Beijing. Only two G20 nations – Canada and India – emerge on the top-10 lists, and only for the EU.<sup>28</sup>

Birgitte Markussen commented on these findings by highlighting the strategic importance of each African nation for Europe: Ethiopia, for example, plays a critical political role in East Africa, and Kenya is the economic driver of humanitarian aid to Somalia and South Sudan. She added, “the more you go South of the Sahara, the more liberal behavior you see towards women.”<sup>29</sup>

When asked about the significance of the UN for the United States, Frank Wisner responded: “This is often a cabinet-level position; it is highly visible and political. Incoming Presidents think very much about the politics when choosing who to appoint. It is extremely partisan, and I would even say, it is part of the President’s legacy.”<sup>30</sup> Samantha Power cautioned against overgeneralizing, arguing, “each President has his own set of variables when considering how to form his cabinet. Obama chose his ambassadors to the UN based on ensuring he would have diverse views in the cabinet and effective negotiators at the UN. He knew he would be dealing with hugely important national security issues, and indeed having people in the job who knew the UN proved essential when confronted with such pressing issues like Iran sanctions or the Ebola crisis.”<sup>31</sup>

The prevalence of women in post-Soviet states, especially in the early 1990s upon their newly gained independence, may speak to the role of women in building

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<sup>28</sup> These are also the only two EU strategic partners on the list.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Birgitte Markussen, Brussels, November 7, 2018.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Frank Wisner, via telephone, November 9, 2018.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Samantha Power, via telephone, March 13, 2019.

relationships in new foreign policy contexts. The German AA, who in the early 1990s had only one or two female ambassadors per year, sent these women to post-Soviet states *in all cases*. It is possible that these were former East German diplomats who had Russian language competences that West German diplomats lacked.<sup>32</sup> This would make sense, given that the “economic necessity and communist ideology ... mobilized women into the labor market [in the DDR], while the Federal Republic was actively attempting to remove women from the labor market.”<sup>33</sup>

The absence of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region for the U.S. and German foreign services is also striking. Two American female ambassadors who served in Kuwait, Libya, and Yemen argued that their gender helped them significantly in this region: “Arab culture is very verbal, expressive, non-linear conversations, relationship-heavy, and not transactional. All of these traits embody Western culture for women, and are strikingly similar to Arab culture for men. The social signaling from each side was in sync.”<sup>34</sup> Ambassador Jones emphasized the level of access she received thanks to her gender, enabling her to enter Arab social circles: “You were not only invited to the back-end discussions with the men, but also the deeply personal circles with the sisters, mothers, wives – inside their homes, at their weddings.”<sup>35</sup> Even in the face of danger, Ambassador Bodine argued that her gender helped her during the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait:

“Three weeks after the invasion, Washington and Baghdad negotiated the withdrawal of all non-essential personnel and dependents, at which point official personnel dropped from 120 to 8. The eight remaining individuals were selected on the basis of their professional competency, need, and ability to handle crisis up to that point; all were volunteers; four happened to be women. This was an active warzone; in the three weeks between the invasion and the imposition of the siege that required the withdrawal of non-essentials and rendered us hostages, the men could not leave the compound, but I could and repeatedly did. I took advantage of the fact that the Iraqi, whatever they thought of America, would not mess with me as a woman – a calculated risk, not a guarantee.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Attempting to discover more about these specific individuals, little information was found. One of them was confirmed as coming from former West Germany, with the role of Deputy Head of the Department for Soviet Affairs in 1967.

<sup>33</sup> Scheidemann, Christiane, “Frauen im Diplomatischen Dienst – Eine historische Einführung,” in Müller, Ursula, and Scheidemann, Christiane (eds.), *Geschicht und Abgesandt: Frauen im Diplomatischen Dienst*, Munich, Olzog, 2000, p. 58 [author’s own translation].

<sup>34</sup> Barbara Bodine, *op. cit.*

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Deborah Jones, via Skype, November 27, 2018.

<sup>36</sup> Barbara Bodine, *op. cit.*

Despite these 'advantages', Bodine argued that American women are only slowly making their way into ambassador circles: "in the MENA region, the first round of [U.S.] female ambassadors were in peripheral countries like Tunisia, Algeria, Oman, and Yemen. Over the decades, we have made our way to more central countries: Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and throughout the Arab Gulf and North Africa. There have been two women in Egypt and one in Jordan, but never in Israel."<sup>37</sup> Recently, Germany appointed its first female Ambassador to Israel, Susanne Wasum-Rainer, who shared that her French counterpart is also a woman.<sup>38</sup>

## Recruitment and Training

The recruitment of ambassadors matters: only with the intake of suitable candidates, and given adequate training, can the execution of a government's foreign policy be effective. The diverse makeup of ambassadors across the U.S., German, and EU foreign services poses an important question vis-à-vis the push and pull factors of qualified candidates, versus the need to fill certain obligations for either political objectives (U.S.) or a fair balance of national representation and expertise (EEAS). In the "start-up stage" of the EEAS, Ashton decided that 60% of European diplomats would be "drawn from the relevant departments of the Commission and General Secretariat of the Council, with an additional third of diplomats coming from Member States' foreign services... following this start-up stage, a more open call for diplomatic recruitment, for example from the European Parliament, would be possible."<sup>39</sup> The AA also made it clear that "the Member States must be represented in suitable numbers at all levels of an External Action Service if it is to be accepted and supported by Member States."<sup>40</sup> In the U.S., the ratio of career to non-career ambassadors has been approximately 2:1 since World War Two, with data from 1953 to 2008 showing that Jimmy Carter nominated the most career envoys (73%),

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Susanne Wasum-Rainer, via telephone, January 31, 2019.

<sup>39</sup> Davis Cross, Mai'a K., "Building a European Diplomacy: Recruitment and Training to the EEAS," *European Foreign Affairs Review*, vol. 16, no. 4, 2011, p. 454.

<sup>40</sup> "EAD," Website of the German Federal Foreign Office, cited in Duke, Simon, "Providing for European-Level Diplomacy after Lisbon: The Case of the European External Action Service," *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2009, p. 232.

while Lyndon Johnson had the fewest (60%).<sup>41</sup> The pathways to ambassadorships for the EU and U.S. foreign services contrast to the German foreign service, which exclusively selects ambassadors from the higher executive service ('Höherer Dienst').<sup>42</sup>

Beyond recruitment, training also differs across the three foreign services. Young American and German diplomats selected for the executive career tracks, following rigorous examination and interviews, subsequently receive an extensive 14-month long preparation (the American A-100 class or German "crew"), with resources like the U.S. Foreign Service Institute and Akademie Auswärtiger Dienst in Berlin-Tegel available to them. These training processes stand in contrast to the EEAS, which offers limited preparation and has had a history of debate. Since Commission staff are not trained as diplomats, nor are national diplomats uniformly trained for European-level diplomacy, the EEAS has struggled with its 'one-size-fits-all' approach. Decades ago, the Commission proposed for national services to augment their own training on EU issues,<sup>43</sup> and the 1996 Williamson Report eventually institutionalized an in-house training for DG-RELEX, which trained for 'European problems' and "imparted a sense of 'common European purpose.'" <sup>44</sup> This evolved into a European Diplomatic Program in 1999 and led to a series of European Parliament publications calling for a 'College of European Diplomacy,' which never materialized.<sup>45</sup> Yet, as U.S. Ambassador Deborah Jones attests, career training is not a determinant of success: "America has been represented by some excellent political appointees, and some terrible career ambassadors."<sup>46</sup> The same can be said for the EEAS, where ambassadors hailing from certain Member States or professional backgrounds may not necessarily be better or worse equipped to tackle the responsibilities demanded.

Nonetheless, recruitment and training are critical factors to assess within gender parameters, as they illuminate the incentive structures females consider when choosing

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<sup>41</sup> Jett, Dennis, *American Ambassadors: The Past, Present, and Future of America's Diplomats*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. 27.

<sup>42</sup> "Arbeiten im Auswärtigen Amt," Website of the Federal Foreign Office.

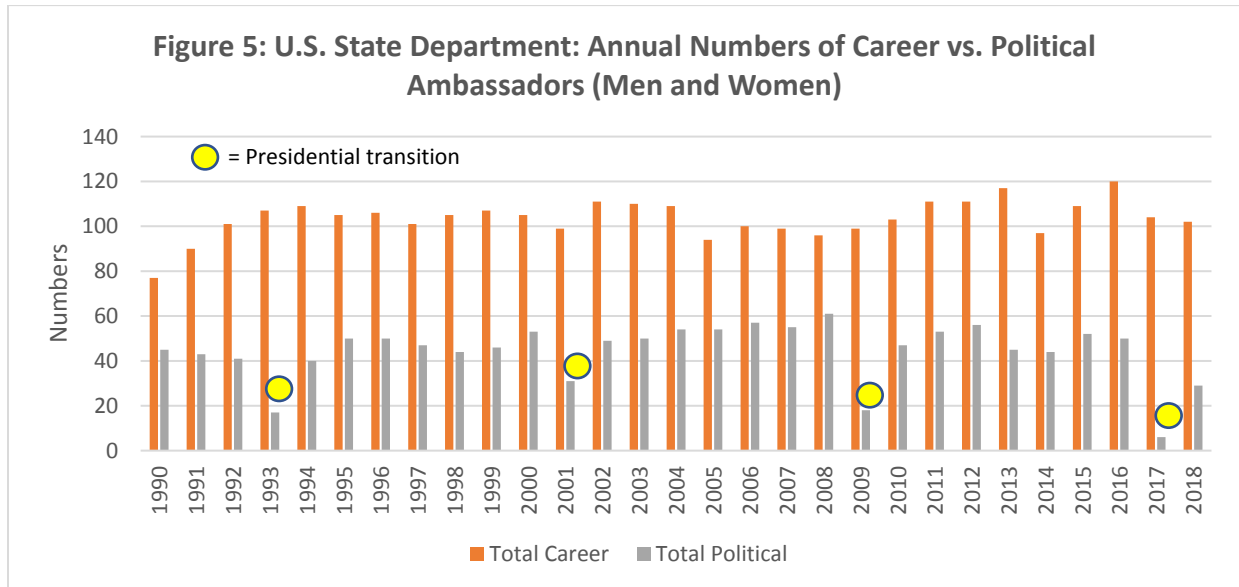
<sup>43</sup> Davis Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 463.

<sup>44</sup> Duke, Simon, "Preparing for European Diplomacy?," *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 40, no. 5, 2002, p. 861.

<sup>45</sup> Davis Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 464.

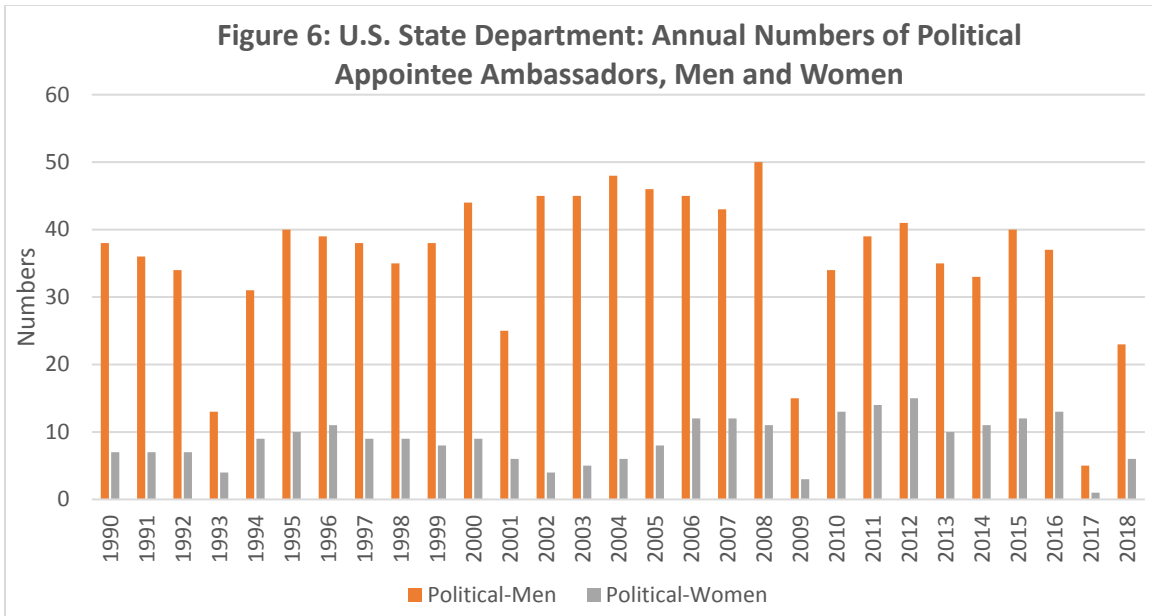
<sup>46</sup> Deborah Jones, *op. cit.*

a career path, given their perceptions linking preparation for the foreign service and the likelihood of becoming an ambassador. These factors arguably set the tone for organizational culture as well, either facilitating or impeding women’s progress towards ambassadorships.



To understand the general landscape of U.S. ambassadors, Figure 5 above shows the total numbers of political appointee and career ambassadors by year. It reveals that roughly one-third of ambassadors are political appointees and two-thirds are career ambassadors. The yellow points, indicating Presidential transitions, show dramatic drops in the number of political appointees. This was expected: “The ambassadorships in the first year of a new Presidency are overwhelmingly political. Because political appointees must resign the day a President leaves office, there are more vacancies to fill. Career ambassadors are placed into new posts in the summer before an election, so that they’re already at post during a Presidential transition.”<sup>47</sup> A deeper look at the gender makeup of each ‘type’ of ambassador in Figure 6 below is revealing:

<sup>47</sup> Barbara Bodine, *op. cit.*



Amongst political appointees, there is an overwhelming presence of men, at a ratio of approximately 4:1.

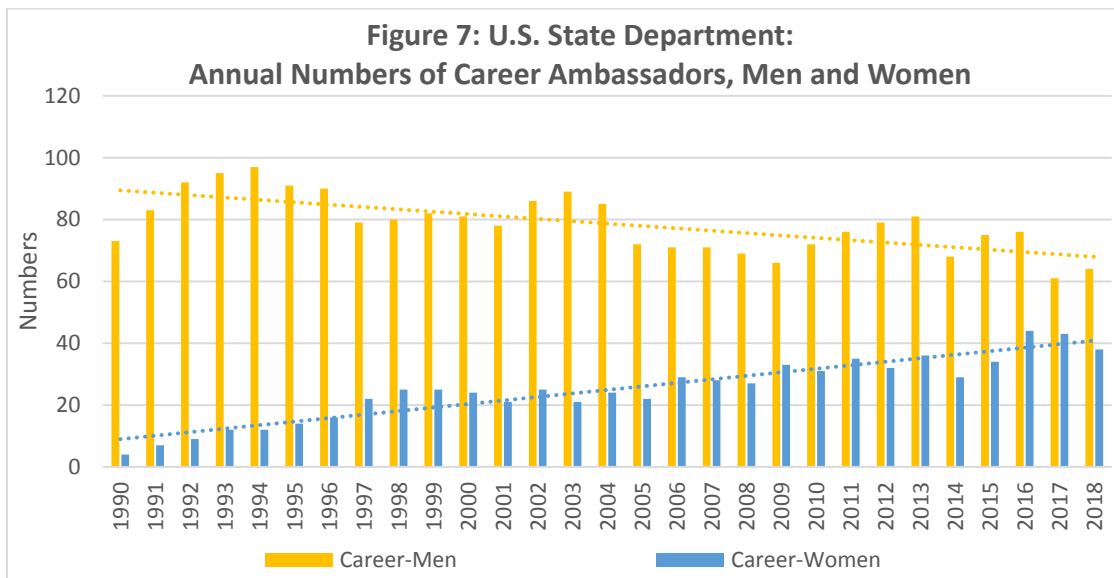
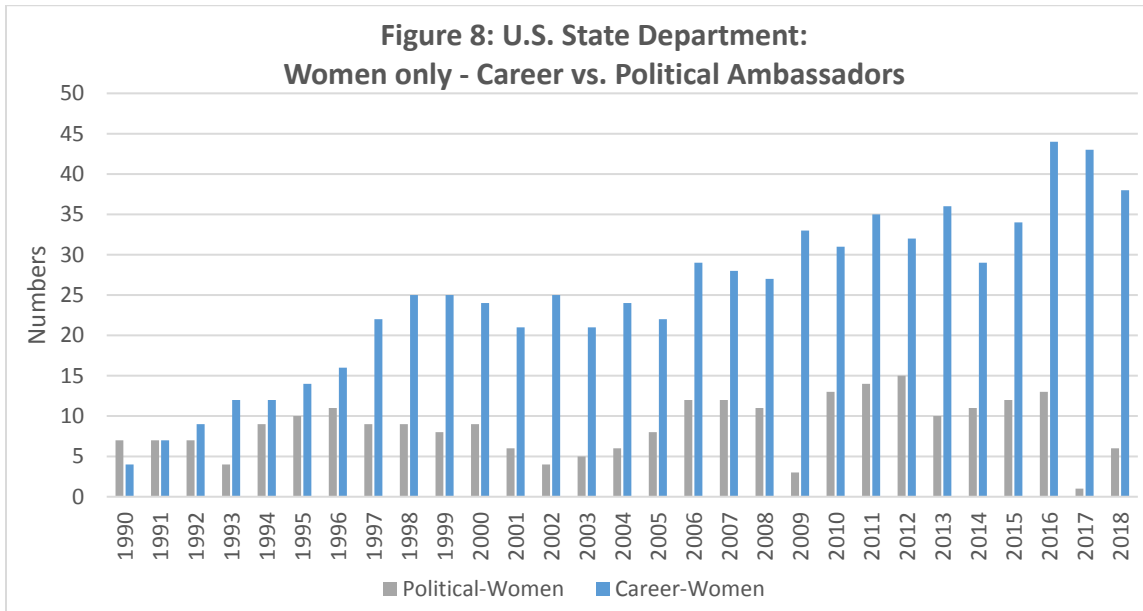


Figure 7 above shows that there are still more males than females amongst career ambassadors, although the number of career-women has steadily increased (as depicted by the blue trendline). Meanwhile, the yellow-dotted trendline shows that the number of career-men has steadily decreased, though at a slower rate. This is important because it indicates that, first, women are choosing the State Department career path

more rapidly than men, and, second, State Department recruitment structures have evolved to facilitate women's representation.



In examining women only, it can be derived from Figure 8 above that more female ambassadors come from the career track. A deeper look in Table 3 below delves into where these individuals are placed:

Table 3: Number of U.S. ambassadors, 1990-2018, by region sent to and training

Region <sup>48</sup>	Total Women	Career-Women
Western Africa	45	45
Eastern Africa	35	32
Multilateral Organization	27	3
South America	21	19
Western Asia	19	19
Northern Europe	18	8
Middle Africa	17	17
Central America	17	12
Southeastern Asia	15	14
Southern Europe	15	10
Southern Africa	14	12
Caribbean	14	7
Southern Asia	14	13
Eastern Europe	13	8
Central Asia	13	13
Oceania/Micronesia	12	10
Northern Africa	9	8
Oceania/Melanesia	7	6
Eastern Asia	5	4
Oceania/Australia and New Zealand	3	1

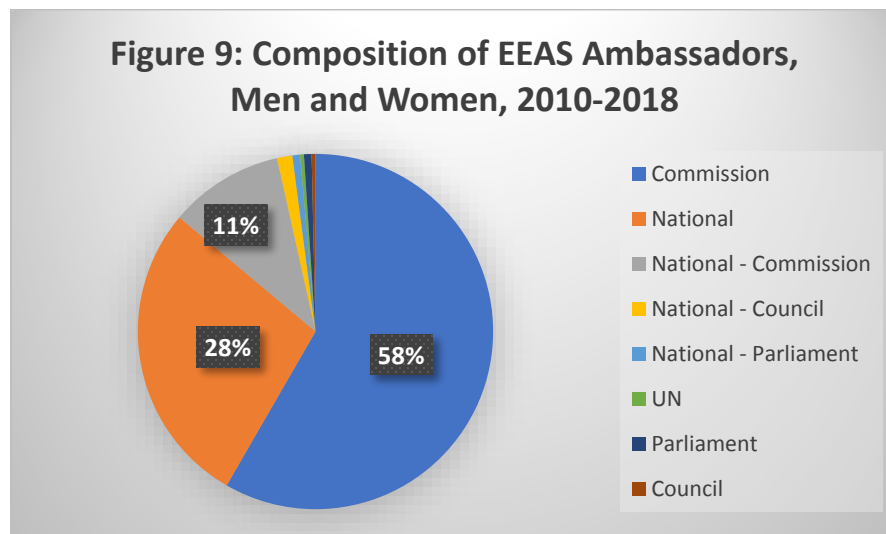
Region	Total Men	Career-men
Western Asia	132	117
Western Africa	104	102
Eastern Africa	104	83
South America	86	72
Multilateral Organization	83	23
Southern Europe	82	51
Northern Europe	74	25
Eastern Europe	74	45
Southeastern Asia	70	58
Middle Africa	55	54
Central America	52	33
Western Europe	47	5
Southern Asia	46	38
Caribbean	34	11
Northern Africa	33	25
Southern Africa	33	24
Eastern Asia	30	13
Central Asia	28	28
Oceania/Australia and New Zealand	13	2
Oceania/Micronesia	10	10
Oceania/Melanesia	10	8

<sup>48</sup> The grouping of regions is drawn from the UN Statistics Division. UN Statistics Division, *Standard country or area codes for statistical use (M49)*.



The tables, and in particular the yellow-highlighted rows, confirm many colloquially-held stereotypes: indeed, there are regions whose diplomatic complexity require the expertise of career ambassadors, while representation in other areas of the world can be entrusted to political appointees. In particular, in Western Africa, all 45 female U.S. ambassadors over the last 28 years came from the career track, as did 102 out of 104 of the male ambassadors. Similarly, Eastern Africa, Western Asia (this includes the Middle East), Middle Africa, Central America, and Central Asia have almost all, if not 100%, of their U.S. ambassadors – both men and women – coming from the career track. This contrasts with the Caribbean and European regions, where the majority are political appointees. Notably, Western Europe is not even on the list for women, whereas 42 of the 47 male U.S. ambassadors to Western Europe have been political appointees. Political appointees are also heavily represented at multilateral organizations, where only 3 out of 27 women, and only 23 out of 83 males, were career ambassadors.

In Europe, the analyses begin with the creation of the EEAS, as the political mandate to select a balance of ambassadors with backgrounds in the Commission, Council, and national foreign ministries burgeoned a more diverse workforce in terms of recruitment and training.



The results in Figure 9 above show that the majority of ambassadors – both men and women – have a Commission background (58%), while 28% are Member State diplomats. It is common for EU ambassadors to have begun a career in the national foreign service before entering the Commission and then the EEAS (11%). Taken together,

this means that a total of 39% of ambassadors have attained formal diplomatic training through the national level. These results align almost perfectly with Ashton's initial aim to reach a workforce composed of 60% Commission staff and one third Member State diplomats.<sup>49</sup>

**Table 4: Number of EU ambassadors, 2010-2018, by gender and training**

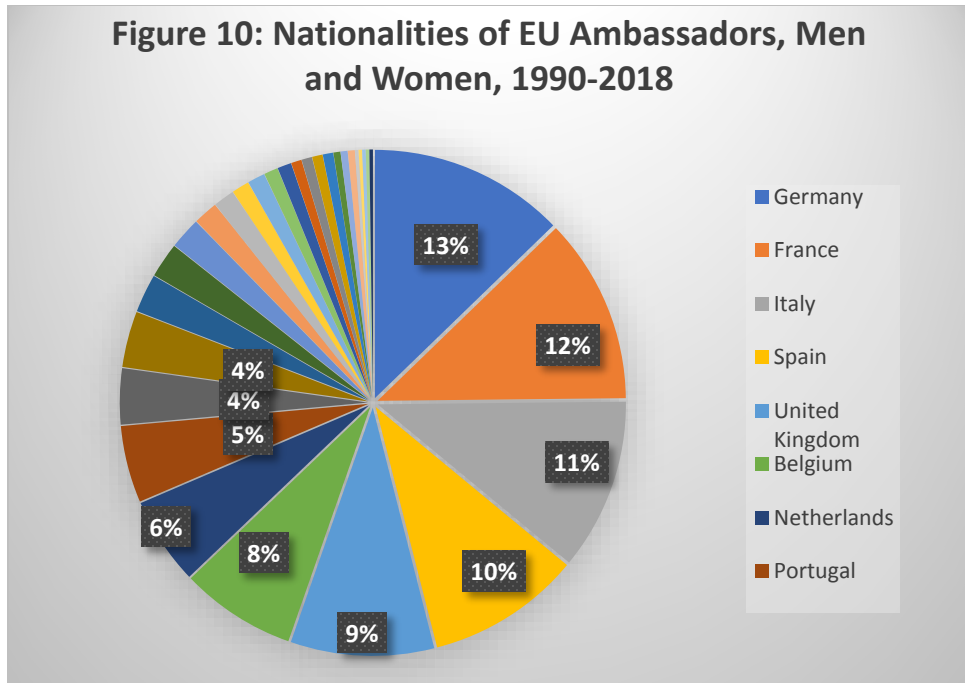
<b>Training/Origin</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
Commission	137	31
National	65	15
National - Commission	28	2
National - Council	4	0
Parliament	2	0
National - Parliament	1	1
UN	1	0
Council	1	0

These findings also apply to female ambassadors, with approximately two-thirds coming from the Commission and one-third coming from national foreign services, as shown by Table 4 above. Notably, while it is common for men to have begun their careers as national diplomats and then progressed to the Commission before joining the EEAS (28 ambassadors), this is very uncommon for female ambassadors (two ambassadors).

As shown in Figure 10 and Table 5, a study of the nationalities of EU ambassadors from 1990 to 2018 reveals disproportionate representation amongst founding Member States, with almost 50% of female ambassadors (20 women out of 43 total) coming from France, Germany, or Italy:

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<sup>49</sup> Davis Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 454.



**Table 5: Number of EU ambassadors, 1990-2018, by gender and nationality (Top 10)**

Nationality	Women	Total # Ambassadors
France	8	53
Germany	6	56
Italy	6	49
Spain	5	44
Belgium	4	33
Netherlands	4	25
Portugal	4	22
United Kingdom	2	41
Finland	2	7
Poland	2	6

In conclusion, the above analyses are an attempt to illuminate how women's representation at the ambassadorial level has changed across three foreign services over twenty-eight years. What becomes evident is the necessity to examine more nuanced factors than just numbers over time: including 'types' of posts sent to and recruitment pipelines and training is essential. Only with the full context can appropriate solutions be sought.

## Possible Causes of Women's Differential Representation in Diplomacy

Though impossible to explain definitively, it is worth considering the underlying factors that may have contributed to the data trends seen in the previous section. After all, the state of gender equality today is the product of evolving legal, social, and historical factors. Michelle Obama once said: "sameness breeds more sameness, until you make a thoughtful effort to counteract it."<sup>50</sup> In the same vein, Frank Wisner gave an honest and introspective account about enacting change within the U.S. foreign service of the 1960s: "People shape their horizons based on what they know. It never struck me as odd that there weren't more women. I didn't consider it because it wasn't right in front of me. There were no women around me, and none before me. You wanted to get the most qualified people for the job, but they just weren't women. You had to realize that they were disadvantaged historically and structurally, and you had to start naming women [to positions] even if they didn't have the qualifications. That was the price of breaking through."<sup>51</sup> The manners in which the seeds of change are planted may vary, and no such evolution can be interpreted in black and white only.

Through debate and speculation, interviewees suggest that policy changes were most influential in determining women's opportunities. As Meyerson and Fletcher argue, "it's not the [glass] ceiling that's holding women back; it's the whole structure of the organizations in which we work."<sup>52</sup> In the U.S. foreign service, institutionalized policies legitimized discrimination at the highest levels for a long time: married women were unable to apply or work for the diplomatic corps up until 1972, and, formal evaluations of male officers even included reviews of their wives' hostessing abilities.<sup>53</sup> During the 1970s, organizations like the Women's Action Organization found their beginnings and the 1964 Civil Rights Act was amended to require federal agencies to implement affirmative action programs.<sup>54</sup> In Germany, the 1968 Herwarth Commission laid the groundwork for rebuilding the professional culture and broken prestige of the foreign

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<sup>50</sup> Obama, Michelle, *Becoming*, New York, Crown Publishing, 2018, p. 418.

<sup>51</sup> Frank Wisner, *op. cit.*

<sup>52</sup> Meyerson, Debra and Fletcher, Joyce, "A Modest Manifesto for Shattering the Glass Ceiling," *Harvard Business Review*, January/February 2000 Issue.

<sup>53</sup> Enloe, Cynthia, *Bananas, Beaches, & Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1989, p. 106.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

service, due to the continued reliance on officers who had served during the Nazi regime in the post-war era.<sup>55</sup> The report catalyzed the anonymization of the AA's selection process, stymying the opportunity ladder for upper-class men. Still, it was only in 1987 that a department for 'Women and Family Affairs' was created within the AA, which lobbied for employment opportunities for spouses abroad, opened access to mental health and therapy resources for children, and established a daycare center in Bonn for the children of employees.<sup>56</sup> The first AA Gender Action Plan was mandated by law in 1995 and required a detailed examination, and subsequent explanation, as to why 50% gender equality was not being reached.<sup>57</sup> In Europe, the Lisbon Treaty was a critical catalyst for women's participation; as the data shows, the percentage of female ambassadors never exceeded 10% prior to 2010. Echoing Stella Zervoudaki, the mandate to have frequent turnover amongst Delegations, with the requirement to return to Brussels after two consecutive terms, was a monumental change for women.

Furthermore, organizational processes have proven to vary widely across services, influencing ambassador selections. Notably, the EEAS is the only foreign service in this study in which candidates carry the burden to apply for an ambassadorship (as opposed to being 'tapped,' like in the U.S. and German foreign services). Broadly speaking, after a call for applications, candidates for an EU ambassadorship are screened on objective criteria (like management experience or prior experience in an embassy abroad), and, once short-listed by a selection committee composed of EEAS, Commission, Council representatives, and Member State diplomats, are passed on to the Office of the High Representative; at this point, all candidates are equally qualified, and criteria like gender and nationality come into play.<sup>58</sup> Commenting on this process, David O'Sullivan assured: "It really depends on who applies. I was the only one to apply to my current posting, and, to my knowledge, the only candidates applying for the positions in Japan and China

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<sup>55</sup> Block, Bryce, Cousar, Catherine, and Suttin, Marne, "Germany," in Hutchings, Robert and Suri, Jeremi (eds.), *Developing Diplomats: Comparing Form and Culture Across Diplomatic Services*, The University of Texas at Austin, 2017, p. 80.

<sup>56</sup> Müller, Ursula, "Vision und Gegenwart," in Müller, Ursula, and Scheidemann, Christiane (eds.), *Gewandt, Geschickt und Abgesandt: Frauen im Diplomatischen Dienst*, Munich, Olzog, 2000, p. 22 [author's own translation].

<sup>57</sup> An extended version of this study analyzes the most recent Gender Action Plans of the three foreign services.

<sup>58</sup> Interview with anonymous Head of EU Delegation.

were men.”<sup>59</sup> Marie-Anne Coninx stressed that women must throw their hats into the ring: “When no women apply, how can there be more female ambassadors?”<sup>60</sup> Conversely, in America, these decisions depend on personal connections to the Administration (for political appointees) or high visibility in the State Department. In Germany, one must be in a position visible to those with decision-making power: “I have no idea who exactly appointed me, but as Director General of the Legal Department, I worked across the entire AA and was supposedly very visible.”<sup>61</sup> As such, the candidate’s ability to ‘apply’ for an ambassadorship is much more restricted and less transparent in the cases of the U.S and Germany. The process of ‘tapping’ can be problematic for females aspiring towards ambassadorships, given the subjective nature of those doing the appointing and the subconscious bias they inject into their choices.

To go on, American interviewees commented on recent social movements, which, they said, gave renewed gender awareness in societies, especially towards women in leadership positions. The 2016 election of Donald Trump - fraught with scandals, including the infamous Access Hollywood tape - particularly underscored the abuse of power and its prevalence in society.<sup>62</sup> Following the 2017 inauguration, the Women’s March called for “dismantling systems of oppression through nonviolent resistance and building inclusive structures guided by self-determination, dignity and respect.”<sup>63</sup> Only months later was it revealed that Harvey Weinstein had sexually harassed dozens of women for over three decades.<sup>64</sup> The subsequent #MeToo movement gave a platform to voice personal stories of sexual harassment and hold perpetrators accountable. One year later, the New York Times found that more than half of the 201 powerful men removed from their posts were replaced by women.<sup>65</sup> In November 2018,

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<sup>59</sup> Interview with David O’Sullivan, via telephone, December 18, 2018.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Marie-Anne Coninx, via telephone, December 21, 2018.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with anonymous German Ambassador.

<sup>62</sup> Fahrenthold, David, “Trump recorded having extremely lewd conversation about women in 2005,” *Washington Post*, October 8, 2016.

<sup>63</sup> “Mission,” Women’s March.

<sup>64</sup> Kantor, Jodi, and Twohey, Megan, “Harvey Weinstein Paid Off Sexual Harassment Accusers for Decades,” *New York Times*, October 5, 2017.

<sup>65</sup> Carlsen, Audrey, et. al. “#MeToo Brought Down 201 Powerful Men; Nearly Half of Their Replacements Are Women,” *New York Times*, October 29, 2018.

a record number of female candidates ran and were elected to public office, with over 100 women in the House of Representatives and 23 in the Senate.<sup>66</sup>

Taking a wider perspective, interviewees suggested that certain historical events proved pivotal in changing the foreign policy objectives of the three services. The EU's increasing involvement in global affairs – from enhanced observer status at the UN, its participation in G8/G20 fora, its deployment of troops in peace operations worldwide, and the increasing comprehensiveness of the Common Foreign and Security Policy – created a “growing expectation that the EU speak with one voice abroad.”<sup>67</sup> The Lisbon Treaty, in response, adjusted and consolidated the legal competences of the EU, most prominently elevating its diplomatic ‘actorness.’<sup>68</sup> Coupled with the EU's heft as an integrated bloc – representing half a billion citizens, a prosperous internal market, and its own currency – signaled its diplomatic legitimacy to the world. The changing nature of EU diplomacy has thus provided more opportunities for women to help craft a diverse image of the EU abroad. In America, the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 were perhaps the most significant for U.S. diplomacy in the last three decades. The attacks marked a newfound awareness of anti-Americanism abroad, making America more cognizant of the importance of engaging with individuals in foreign countries on the ground-level. Whether subsequent public diplomacy initiatives were beneficial to women's participation can only be speculated, though certainly the declaration of the ‘War on Terror’ catapulted the U.S. to have a strong military presence in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Barbara Bodine reiterated this point: “In 2003, the face of America was a 23-year-old white guy with a gun and a flak jacket. Women serving as ambassadors in these heavily militarized environments, along with most civilian officials, struggled dealing with an extraordinarily male-dominated military structure.”<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Salam, Maya, “A Record 117 Women Won Office, Reshaping America's Leadership,” *New York Times*, November 7, 2018.

<sup>67</sup> Spence, David, “Taking Stock: 50 Years of European Diplomacy,” *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2009, p. 239.

<sup>68</sup> Hoffmeister, Frank, “Of Presidents, High Representatives and European Commissioners: The External Representation of the European Union Seven Years after Lisbon”, *Europe and the World: A Law Review*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2017, p. 8.

<sup>69</sup> Barbara Bodine, *op. cit.*

Finally, and above all, conversations with seasoned diplomats made clear that no historical or cultural event has held as much sway over a woman's career as her own decisions. The diplomatic career undoubtedly exercises more strain on family than traditional occupations, requiring frequent moves, time away from loved ones, and the ability to serve in hardship posts with no partner or children present. Of the seven female ambassadors interviewed, four are married with children, one never married, nor had children; one is a single mother; and one is divorced, with children. All three male ambassadors interviewed are married with children. One female U.S. ambassador did not live with her husband, himself a U.S. ambassador, for 10 years; time as a family of four was enjoyed exclusively during holidays; they have since amicably divorced.<sup>70</sup> One EU ambassador only considered a career in a Delegation abroad once her youngest child had completed primary school.<sup>71</sup> Another ambassador spoke of a colleague female ambassador whose husband was willing to manage housework and childcare; but, of her own situation, said: "my husband never would have accepted that. While I was in West Africa, my husband and children lived in Europe and I travelled back on weekends."<sup>72</sup> Samantha Power, on work-life balance, commented:

"There were moments where I felt I wasn't doing anything properly. You want to be a great ambassador and a great mom. My solution was to integrate the two worlds as best I could. I would talk to my kids about the 'adult' things I was doing at work in terms they could understand. I think they would have paid an enormous price had I continued in the U.S. Government for longer. I had both kids while working at the White House. When I left the UN job, I had the chance, as a political appointee, to return to academia and spend more time with them. But this must be immensely challenging for career ambassadors with children as they advance in the State Department."<sup>73</sup>

The complicated circumstances detailed in these examples portray a career that will test any individual, partner, or family, regardless of the steps the organization takes to enable its employees to lead the personal lives they desire.

Table 6 provides a summary of the most note-worthy findings.

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<sup>70</sup> Anonymous U.S. Ambassador

<sup>71</sup> Anonymous Head of EU Delegation

<sup>72</sup> Anonymous Head of EU Delegation

<sup>73</sup> Samantha Power, *op. cit.*



## Table 6: Results overview: most note-worthy observations

### **Numbers Over Time:**

- The percentage of female ambassadors has increased over time, with the U.S. State Department peaking at 40% female ambassadors in 2017; the EU at 22% in 2014; and Germany at 14.5% in 2018.
- Germany's results are especially disappointing, since the AA has more filled postings than the EU and U.S.
- Exploring linkages between political leadership and female ambassadors reveals that, in the U.S., high female representation often coincides with a female Secretary of State, particularly under Madeleine Albright; in Germany, the most significant increases in female ambassadors occurred following German unification and in the early 2010s under Guido Westerwelle, though the two most significant decreases both occurred under Frank Walter Steinmeier; in the EU, the data suggests that Federica Mogherini has not continued Ashton's trend of appointing female ambassadors, though it may be too early to tell.

### **Posts Sent to:**

- Across all three services, there is prevalent representation of female ambassadors in small, African nations like South Sudan, Burundi, Niger, Ethiopia, Senegal, Benin, Chad, Congo, and Kenya.
- Multilateral postings (UNESCO, OECD, UN New York, and OPCW) also have their fair share of female ambassadors.
- There is a strong representation of women in former Soviet states (Kyrgyzstan, Belarus, Moldova, former Yugoslavia (Macedonia), Bulgaria, and Slovakia), especially in the early 1990s. Kyrgyzstan is represented in the top-10 lists for all three foreign services. Though the German AA had only one or two female ambassadors total per year in the early 1990s, in all cases they were sent to one of these states.
- Absence of prestigious postings include: Washington, Tokyo, Tel Aviv, Moscow, and Beijing. Instead, there is a peculiar contrast in a powerful nation like the U.S. repeatedly sending women to Micronesia (the #1 post).

### **Recruitment and Training:**

- ~ 1/3 of U.S. ambassadors are political appointees and 2/3 are career ambassadors, with females more likely to come from the career track.
- The rate of female U.S. career ambassadors has steadily increased, while the rate of male career ambassadors has decreased, suggesting that 1) women are choosing the State Department career path more rapidly than men, and 2) recruitment structures have evolved to facilitate women's representation. Meanwhile, political appointee ambassadors remain overwhelmingly male, at a ratio of 4:1.
- Almost all, if not 100%, of U.S. ambassadors in Western, Eastern, and Middle Africa, as well as Western Asia (includes Middle East), Central America, and Central Asia are career ambassadors. This contrasts with the Caribbean and European regions, as well as multilateral organizations, where the majority of U.S. ambassadors are political appointees.
- Since the EEAS' establishment, ~2/3 of female ambassadors came from the European Commission, whereas ~1/3 came from national foreign services. While it is common for men to have begun their careers as national diplomats and then progressed to the Commission, before joining the EEAS, this is very uncommon for female ambassadors (28:2).
- EU female ambassadors from 1990-2018 come most frequently from founding Member States, with almost 50% (20 women out of 43 total) coming from France, Germany, or Italy. This contrasts to previous studies assessing gender and nationality at the Council, as well as the EEAS throughout Ashton's term, which find that newer Member States have more balanced gender representation (these studies assessed all levels).

## Conclusion: Towards the Future

The primary contribution of this work is its dataset, whose time-intensive production has enabled a view into a combination of information never before examined. In addition to the elementary analyses generated from it, there are many potential opportunities for future research. As a next step, more advanced econometrics could explore the statistical significance of new contextual factors and their correlations with ‘types’ of posts sent to, including:

- The WomanStats Project, which quantifies variables like the physical security of women, and the discrepancy between national law and practice concerning women.<sup>74</sup>
- The Peace Research Institute Oslo, which quantifies a country’s involvement in international conflict.<sup>75</sup>
- Polity IV Project, which quantifies a country’s regime type.<sup>76</sup>
- World Bank Indicators, which, among other variables, quantifies the percentage of national parliament that is female, GDP per capita, and military expenditure as a percent of GDP.<sup>77</sup>

An examination of the level of Deputy, one step below an ambassador, would also add value, considering this is “training grounds for an ambassadorship.”<sup>78</sup> Alternatively, which ‘cone’ U.S. career ambassadors come from, a choice made at the beginning of one’s career upon taking the Foreign Service Officer Test, could also be considered (i.e. many ambassadors are said to come from the political cone).<sup>79</sup> The gender balance in recruitment pipelines for the A-100 classes or German ‘crews’ would also be insightful. In particular, an analysis of retention rates would be valuable to testing not only the quality of recruitment pipelines, but also whether there are sufficient incentives to staying in the career. Finally, to truly grasp the foreign policy actors that

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<sup>74</sup> WomanStats Project, *Dataset Multivaria-Scale-1 (physical security of women) and Dataset Multivar-Scale-2 (the discrepancy between national law and practice concerning women)*.

<sup>75</sup> The Peace Research Institute Oslo, *Data on Armed Conflict*.

<sup>76</sup> Polity IV Project, The Integrated Network for Societal Conflict, sponsored by the Center for Systemic Peace, *Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2013*.

<sup>77</sup> World Bank, *Indicators*.

<sup>78</sup> Barbara Bodine, *op. cit.*

<sup>79</sup> “5 Career Tracks for Foreign Service Officers,” U.S. Department of State.

maintain and boost the transatlantic relationship, it would be most ideal to include the British and French foreign services.

Nonetheless, a variety of policy recommendations can be derived from the analyses presented. It becomes evident that a regular dialogue – between national ministries, but also across country lines and between services – could serve to identify ‘best practices’ for recruitment, promotion, and retention, helping to mainstream gender considerations across governments. On this front, the EU could coordinate more with its Member States. Nominating ‘gender envoys’ to pioneer this work would be a beneficial first step: the EU’s appointment of Mara Marinaki as gender advisor and Helga Schmid’s Task Force on Gender and Equal Opportunities are steps in the right direction. In addition to gender envoys, women’s mentoring and networking groups – like Executive Women at State (EW@S), the Federal Women’s Program, and frauen@diplo e.V – must continue to be institutionalized and legitimized. Very importantly, it must be top leadership that drive efforts towards gender equality. For example, senior management that mandates annual Gender Action Plans (very positively already in existence for the three foreign services selected) would set a strong tone. Such Gender Action Plans compile statistics on diversity within the service, providing monitoring frameworks against which to set goals and hold institutions accountable.<sup>80</sup> Finally, top leadership could consider altering recruitment methods for ambassadors, applying a ‘tap-apply-search’ mixture. Such a process could help avoid implicit bias in ‘tapping’ ambassadors, encourage new applicants to take initiative for postings they may otherwise not consider, and push employees to approach women about specific roles for which they are qualified, but have not applied. These policy recommendations ultimately serve to encourage a convergence of approaches across the three services in order to elevate gender equality as a transatlantic – and indeed, global – priority.

To conclude, this work serves as a reminder that the American, German, and EU diplomatic corps must set an example of the progressive values they have championed

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<sup>80</sup> For a detailed assessment on whether the U.S., German and EU Gender Action Plans adequately reflect areas for improvement, have chosen strong indicators to measure progress, and propose realistic solutions, see: Schiemichen, Laura, *Madam Ambassador: A Statistical Comparison of Female Ambassadors across the U.S., German, and EU Foreign Services*, Master’s thesis, College of Europe, Bruges, and The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Medford, April 2019.

since the end of the Cold War. The outcome of this comparative gender research, one hopes, further binds the value of gender equality within the transatlantic relationship, to be implemented more methodically and strategically by foreign policy actors on both sides of the Atlantic. A future generation of foreign policy leaders depends on it.

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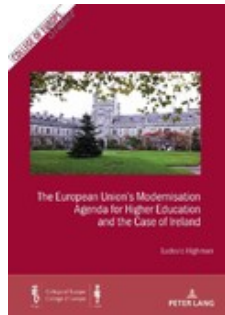
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