Participation of women in ministerial cabinets of democratically elected women presidents in Latin America

Participación de mujeres en gabinetes ministeriales de presidentas elegidas democráticamente en América Latina

Participação de mulheres em gabinetes ministeriais de mulheres presidentes eleitos democraticamente na América Latina

Liliana Elizabeth Ruiz Acosta
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3323-8480
Magíster en Gestión Empresarial. Docente tiempo completo. Universidad Militar Nueva Granada. Bogotá (Colombia). liliana.ruiz@unimilitar.edu.co

Wilson Lara Bernal
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2087-439X
Doctor en Historia. Asistente de investigación vinculado al proyecto INV-ECO-2079. Universidad Militar Nueva Granada. Bogotá (Colombia). E-mail: wlarab88@gmail.com

David Andrés Camargo Mayorga
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5290-8251
Magíster en Economía. Docente tiempo completo. Universidad Militar Nueva Granada. Bogotá (Colombia). david.camargo@unimilitar.edu.co

Abstract

Introduction: There are State policies that can contribute to increasing the participation of women in public life, one of which is the gender quotas implemented by some countries in this century. The idea that women and men have the same capacity to occupy leadership positions deserves a study of the conditions in which they access management positions. **Objective:** To describe the participation of women in the ministerial cabinets of the six democratically elected presidents in Latin America. **Methodology:** Qualitative-descriptive, based on documentary analysis. **Results:** The ministerial cabinets described were characterized by a relatively low presence of women, with high participation as in the case of Costa Rica, and low in Nicaragua. In addition, it was found that the duration of the ministers in their positions on average was short and that the ministries in which they were appointed are mostly not the ones with the greatest visibility and importance due to their performance. **Conclusions:** Female participation in female presidents' cabinets was relatively weak due to the preference that continues to exist for male leaders.

Keywords: Gender; Politics; Women presidents; Ministries; Latin America

Resumen

Introducción: Existen políticas de Estado que pueden contribuir a incrementar la participación de las mujeres en la vida pública, una de ellas son las cuotas de género implementadas por algunos países en el siglo XXI. La idea de que las mujeres y los hombres poseen la misma capacidad para ocupar cargos de liderazgo merece un estudio de las condiciones en las que acceden a puestos directivos. **Objetivo:** Describir la participación de mujeres en los gabinetes ministeriales de seis presidentas electas democráticamente en América Latina. **Metodología:** Cualitativo-descriptiva, basada en análisis de contenido. **Resultados:** Los gabinetes ministeriales descritos se caracterizaron por una presencia relativamente baja de las mujeres, con participaciones altas en Costa Rica y bajas en Nicaragua. Además, se encontró que la duración de las ministras en sus encargos en promedio fue reducida y que los ministerios en los que fueron designadas en su mayoría no son los de mayor visibilidad e importancia por sus ejecutorias. **Conclusiones:** La participación de mujeres en los gabinetes de las presidentas fue relativamente débil por la preferencia que sigue existiendo por los liderazgos masculinos.

Palabras clave: Género; Política; Ministerios; Presidentas; América Latina[1]

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[1] Los términos clave han sido recuperados a partir del Tesauro Universidad de Barcelona (Multidisciplinario).

Resumen

Introducción: Existem políticas de Estado que podem contribuir para aumentar a participação da mulher na vida pública, uma delas são as cotas de gênero implementadas por alguns países neste século. A ideia de que mulheres e homens têm a mesma capacidade para ocupar cargos de chefia merece um estudo sobre as condições em que acedem a cargos de chefia. **Objetivo:** Descrever a participação das mulheres nos gabinetes ministeriais de seis presidentes eleitos democraticamente na América Latina. **Metodologia:** Qualitativa-descritiva, baseada na análise de conteúdo. **Resultados:** Os gabinetes ministeriais descritos caracterizaram-se por uma presença relativamente baixa de mulheres, com alta participação como no caso da Costa Rica e baixa na Nicarágua. Além disso, constatou-se que a duração média dos ministros em seus cargos foi curta e que os ministérios para os quais foram nomeados, em sua maioria, não são os de maior visibilidade e importância devido à sua atuação. **Conclusão:** A participação feminina nos gabinetes das presidentes foi relativamente fraca devido à preferência que continua existindo por lideranças masculinas.

Palavras-chave: Gênero; Política; Mulheres presidentes; Ministérios; América Latina

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Introduction

Leadership should essentially be understood as a process in which a leader has the capacity to influence others who are called followers, based on a relationship that is interactive and for which common objectives are shared (Bass and Bass, 2009). There are various leadership styles that are related to the leader's gender (Park, 1996), personality traits and leadership qualities (Rabelo et al., 2022).

Women have traditionally been identified with a participative or demo- cratic type of leadership style (Cuadrado, 2003; Ruiz Acosta and Camargo Mayorga, 2018) and transformational (Gaur et al., 2024); however, from other perspectives they are defined as having more agile leadership qualities than men (Akkaya and Üstgörül, 2020), who, in turn, are often characterized as transactional type leaders (Offringa and Groeneveld, 2023).

Cuadrado et al. (2012) argue that women can be more negotiating and self-critical leaders than their male counterparts, which depends on who makes the evaluation of that leadership and whether the organization they lead is considered masculine or feminine. On the other hand, authors such as Miranda (2019) and Nassar et al. (2021) estimate that there are no differences when comparing the leadership styles of men and women.

For Lari et al. (2022), a bias towards male leadership persists, which has become normalized and naturalized in many contexts, supported by forms of social and organizational relationships that privilege men and masculinity (Piggott and Pike, 2020), despite the fact that women have slowly begun to participate in sectors that were considered male-dominated (O'Brien et al., 2023).

Gender roles are social constructions with reference to the productive and reproductive spheres assigned to men and women, respectively, based on social constructs (Saldívar Garduño et al., 2015). The continuous process of women's struggle for recognition generated the search for spaces in which their participation in different spheres is exalted and rewarded, thus leading to emancipation from patriarchal relations and entry into the labor market without abandoning or neglecting their responsibility in the home (López Dietz, 2010), far from the pressures that women still face in the labor market, for example, in hypermasculine organizations (Karazi-Presler and Wasserman, 2024), or due to phenomena such as the "glass ceiling" (Groeneveld et al., 2020).

Although the increase in the presence of women in the workplace is evident, complete equity has not yet been achieved (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2023). In politics, there has been an increase in the possibilities for women to enter public life, which has promoted the awareness of incorporating them in this scenario (Carrión-Yaguana et al., 2023), despite the legacy of the lack of presentation and absence in the political sphere that they have been occupying other roles (Baumeister, 2009).

In this sense, there continues to be a bias on the part of political elites to include female quotas, despite the electoral support that women receive, mainly from others (Carrión-Yaguana et al., 2023).

At the ministerial level, women's participation in government remains weak considering that ministries with more public exposure and greater economic and personnel resources continue to be headed by men, showing gender inequality, even for highly qualified women who are enrolled in government.

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The main barriers faced by women in government are additional to those experienced by their male counterparts in their political careers (Kroeber and Hüffelmann, 2022).

In the European context, Goddard (2019) shows that women are less likely to access managerial positions in central state offices and traditionally male political decision-making areas. Furthermore, that gender differences are mediated by the ideology of the party appointing women, with women being more likely to be appointed to male-identified government portfolios when a party's constituents have progressive gender biases.

In addition, many cases are identified where the female empowerment that has been promoted by female inclusion has actually occurred without "power", leading to gender equity having to wait some more time (Kim et al., 2022).

Considering these problems, this article aims to describe the participation of women in the ministerial cabinets of six democratically elected presidents in Latin America: Violeta Bários Torres, Mireya Moscoso Rodríguez, Laura Chinchilla Miranda, Michelle Bachelet, Cristina Fernández e Kirchner and Dilma Rousseff, to show the participation of women in public life, including the names of the ministers who accompanied them in the exercise of their positions, together with their main achievements.

Methodology

The research was conducted under the qualitative approach, framed as descriptive (Salgado Lévano, 2007). Content analysis was used, which, according to Bardin (2002), is a set of methodological instruments aimed at any oral-written production, which have as a common factor techniques based on hermeneutics, which seeks to deduce the conditions of production and significance of the discourses.

The main objective of content analysis is to infer knowledge about the conditions under which bibliographic production has taken place with the help of qualitative indicators. It tries to find the different ways of interpreting documents on the basis of a number of messages that are identified by the researcher (Bardin, 2002).

The exercise proposed for the development of this article is based on the comparison of the cases of the six selected countries: Nicaragua (1990-1997), Panama (1999-2004), Costa Rica (2010-2014), Chile (2006-2010 and 2014-2018), Argentina (2007-2015) and Brazil (2010-2016), because they have democratically elected women presidents in their political history. The comparison presents a list of actions carried out in each of the governments and what has been done by their women ministers.

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For this purpose, information is collected from scientific journal articles, books, reports, press releases, magazine reports and web pages. This is processed in two phases (Pinto-Molina, 1993). In the first phase of internal analysis, the information is filtered to make a bibliographic description of the information and discard unrelated and irrelevant sources. In the second phase of content analysis, the central ideas of the texts are extracted and the hermeneutic path proposed by Roncan- cio-García et al. (2017) is followed.

Results and discussion

Violeta Barrios Torres (Nicaragua, 1990-1997)

In 1990, Barrios Torres became the first democratically elected woman president in Latin America, serving until 1997, during a historic moment in which she was a symbol of the transition from war to peace in Nicaragua (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs [CIDOB], n. d.).

As mentioned by Fernández (2011), Barrios Torres arrived "at a time of deep social, economic and political crisis, and in general did not support any policy related to women's interests or gender interests" (p. 68). This was reflected in the conformation of his presidential cabinet by not initially including any women in ministerial positions (Ruiz Seisdedos and Grande Gascón, 2015), after three years in office he decided to appoint Martha Palacio as Minister of Health, ending his government with a 10% participation of women, with one woman minister in his cabinet out of a possible 10.

In relation to the actions taken by the only minister in the Barrios Torres cabinet, there was a visit to the Republic of China in 1993, where Minister Palacio, together with her husband Pablo Pereira (Minister of Economy and Development at the time), obtained the consent of Taipei to increase cooperation with medical treatment in Nicaragua.

As a candidate, Barrios Torres represented the interests of merchants, who were the ones who promoted the country's booming economy. Thus, her proposals for coming to power were directed towards offering guarantees for businessmen in their exercise of buying and selling merchandise.

In the National Assembly, Barrios Torres won 51 seats compared to 39 for the Sandinistas, which guaranteed him governance and legislative processing (Ruiz Seisdedos and Grande Gascón, 2015).

During her government, Law 150 was created, which reformed the Penal Code, directly punishing gender violence, prostitution, sexual crimes and human trafficking, a law of great importance for the women of that country. In the same vein, the first Women's Police Station, the National Council against Violence, the National Health Council and the National Commission to Combat Maternal Mortality were created. These changes created some awareness so that in 1995 the Ministry of Health declared that domestic violence was a public health problem (Hamlin Zúniga and Quirós Víquez, 2014).

In addition, the reform of the Labor Code promoted by Barrios Torres opened up new economic opportunities for women, who were provided with child care centers to provide support and generate both work and academic opportunities.

Indeed, this Nicaraguan government supported a unilateral divorce law in favor of the rights of the female population and changed the patriarchal ideology education, but organized the Ocu- pational Conversion Plan, which was criticized for promoting the resignation of members of the state bureaucracy in exchange for a cash payment, in order to reduce the bureaucracy and indirectly induce women to return home to care for their children, taking away possibilities for women.

Similarly, Barrios Torres was strongly criticized by feminist groups for not promoting equality between men and women, and for representing the interests of a society based on patriarchy and

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conservative ideas (Palazón Sáez, 2007). His subordination to the general good was influenced by several positive and negative events during his government, the first of which had to do with his efforts to end the war in which the country had been submerged, in order to ensure the welfare of all citizens and, mainly, to favor mothers, who were demanding time with their children, for which Barrios Torres eliminated the compulsory social service and promoted the demobilization of the "contra" (Paz, 2014).

On January 11, 1997, after six years of government, she handed over her position as president to Arnoldo Alemán, political leader of the Liberal Alliance. In the same year, and after finishing her mandate, she created the Violeta Barrios de Chamorro Foundation, whose main objective was to promote projects in the regions and move initiatives for the strengthening of civil peace within the country.

Mireya Elisa Moscoso Rodríguez (Panama, 1999-2004)

According to Hernández and Camarena (2005), in 1998, after being in opposition for a period of eleven years, Mireya Elisa Moscoso Rodríguez was nominated for a second time to run for the Presidency, obtaining electoral victory on May 2, 1999 under the political affiliation of Unión por Panamá. Her campaign was based on the recovery of Panamanian women's rights, emphasizing the family and advocating for a better distribution of wealth.

Despite having few women in his cabinet, according to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR, 2009), Moscoso Rodríguez signed important protocols and promoted plans in favor of gender equality, such as Executive Decree 53 of June 25, 2002, "which regulates Law 4 of January 29, 1999, which establishes equal opportunities for women, and Law 17 of March 28, 2001, which formalized the suppression of discrimination against women in all its forms".

In Panama, gender quotas were incorporated into the Electoral Code in 1997 during the government of Ernesto Pérez Balladares with Law 22, which established a mandatory participation of 30% of women (Ríos Tobar, 2006), with which the percentage increase in women's participation was evident, given that before the law there was an 8% participation of women in the chambers and after the law it increased to 16.7%. Although the Panamanian electoral system allowed the inclusion of women in the closed lists, women were less elected than men, partly because cultural reasons still gave the voters' trust to men, the initial cabinet of Moscoso Rodriguez had a 30.7% participation of women, selecting four women ministers out of a possible 13.

The first of them, the Minister of the Presidency, Ivonne Young, a 56 year old accountant at that time, who had already been a minister in the previous government, signed Cabinet Decree 24 of November 17, 1999, "whereby some items of the import tariff are eliminated, created and modified". Likewise, the Minister of Youth, Women, Children and Family, Alba Tejada de Rolla, a 58-year-old nursing graduate, who was distinguished, according to the newspaper Panamá América, with the United Nations World Youth Award, El Águila (from the Scout Movement of Panama) and Valor del Año 2000 (public contest) and Mujer de las Américas en 2000 (Women's Association of Bolivia), all this for her dedicated fight for equality of conditions; Doris Rosas de Mata, Minister of Education, a 62-year-old doctor of Philosophy, who repaired 60% of Panama's schools during her term of office.

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Finally, in 2003, Moscoso Rodríguez appointed Lynette Stanziola, a lawyer and the first and only woman to serve as Minister of Agricultural Development, who until her appointment was manager of the La Favorita bakery. Thus, at the end of her administration, a series of favorable changes for the advancement of gender policies and equal conditions were observed, thanks to the competent group of women who supported her administration from the ministries to which they were appointed.

Laura Chinchilla Miranda (Costa Rica, 2010-2014)

In 2008, Chinchilla Miranda, with high popularity, decided to resign from public life; however, a year later she ran for the presidency of the country in 2010, to try, after seventy years, to have a woman elected president again, this time representing the National Liberation Party (PLN). On February 7, with a vote of almost half of the voters (46.8%), she won the elections in Costa Rica (Rodriguez, 2011).

His government had a program aimed at ensuring that Costa Rica enjoyed prosperity and security away from crime, as well as favoring the business fabric, in the latter he contemplated expanding trade agreements with Europe and China, boosting the construction sector through civil works, addressing climate change, improving both domestic production and the education system and poverty indicators. Chinchilla Miranda focused on security together with the public force (Police, because he had no Army since 1948) applying the law against organized crime, to face drug trafficking of Colombian and Mexican origin. From the beginning of her government she defended the traditional family and opposed abortion and same sex marriage.

His government team was initially composed of almost 50% women; since 1997, Costa Rica established the highest percentage of gender quota law in Latin American countries, since it guaranteed 40% of female representation in its structure, delegations and conformation of the lists to be democratically elected. The first of them, Gloria Abraham Peralta, with a master's degree in Sociology from the University of Toulouse in France, at the head of the Ministry of Agriculture, negotiated the Association Agreement between the European Union and Central America, as well as the free trade agreements (FTA) with two Asian countries: China and Singapore.

In the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Commerce, he appointed Mayi Antillón, 52 years old, political scientist, graduate of the University of Costa Rica, executive director of the Chamber of Industries and the Union of Chambers. According to the newspaper El Financiero in the article "Mayi Antillón Contra viento, marea... y trámites" (Ruiz Ramón, 2012), during her time in government, Costa Rica improved in the Doing Business global competitiveness index of the World Bank (WB), with an advance of 12 positions. In addition, the country ranked among the 10 nations that undertook the most reforms to improve the business environment, promoting digital government and implementing measures to simplify procedures for the creation and opening of companies.

María Luisa Ávila, an infectious disease pediatrician and Minister of Health, served for a period of no more than two years due to her political disagreement with the President, and was replaced by Daysi Co rrales, a surgeon with a master's degree in Health Services Administration, who had been in charge of the Ministry of Health for two years, and was replaced by Daysi Co rrales, a surgeon with a master's degree in Health Services Administration, who had been in charge of the Ministry of Health for two years.

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of the Red de Cuido project, which aimed to strengthen and expand comprehensive child care alternatives, promoted by President Chinchilla Miranda, and managed to complete its mandate in 2014 together with the government that appointed her.

In Chinchilla Miranda's cabinet, three women ministers resigned two years after their term in office for personal reasons, handing over the ministry to a man and decreasing the percentage of women's participation, such is the case of the Ministry of Labor where Sandra Piszk, political scientist, who achieved the labor procedural reform that incorporated the principle of orality; Irene Campos, civil engineer, who served as Minister of Housing, according to the Costa Rican newspaper El Financiero: "Her management, however, went unnoticed, which unleashed claims from the real estate sector about the lack of clarity with which the portfolio was conducted" (Ruiz, 2012), despite this she stood out because she modified the law of the national financial system for housing, achieving the deferred bond and the second floor bond. And finally, Laura Alfaro, Minister of National Planning and Economic Policy, who created the Prospective Unit, whose objective was to articulate the vision of long-term national development and its projection into the future with effective use of resources.

Due to a political disagreement, the Minister of Science and Technology, Clotilde Fonseca, a graduate of Harvard University with a Master's degree in Public Administration with emphasis in education and technology policy, resigned one year after her appointment, handing over her position to Alejandro Cruz.

Anabel Gonzalez, Minister of Foreign Trade, with a Master's degree in Law from George Town University, completed her four years in the ministry, among her achievements is the signing of trade agreements with China.

Giselle Goyenaga, triathlon athlete and physical education teacher, was the first woman in Costa Rica to hold the position of Minister of Sports. She resigned before completing one year in office, after a scandal induced by the newspaper La Nación for the speech she gave at the exposition on the Central American Sports Games.

One of the last changes that Chinchilla Miranda had was in 2013 in the Ministry of Justice, after the mandate of two men. Ana Isabel Garita was the third to receive the position, as a lawyer and notary with a specialty in criminal law and criminology with studies done in Europe, she assumed the position and managed to finish the period on par with the president.

At the end of her administration, and after multiple changes, Chinchilla Miranda's cabinet ended with six women in its 23 ministries, where a 16% decrease in women's participation was evident in relation to her initial cabinet.

Michelle Bachelet (Chile, 2006-2010 and 2014-2018)

Michelle Bachelet is one of Chile's most important women, being the first woman to become president of her country through an electoral contest. In December 2005, she won the election over the democratic right in two rounds. In the government she presided, she focused on children and the economy. At the end of her government, she had a high popularity rating of more or less 80 % of the citizens. Bachelet, a

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Once she left the Presidency, she worked at UN Women and then ran again as a candidate to win the elections in two rounds again Evelyn Matthei, who represented a right-wing party (Del Villar, 2012).

Her ministerial policy, on the other hand, was characterized by the broadening of the selection criteria. Initially, her idea was to give ideological diversity to ministerial posts, but, given the compromises with the seven parties that supported her candidacy, Bachelet had to give priority to the Nueva Mayoría coalition. The cabinet at that time was composed of 23 ministries, of which 9 were occupied by women and 14 by men.

The positions occupied by women were the following: the Minister of the Presidency, Ximena Rincón, a law professional, who held a seat in the Senate for the Christian Democratic Party; the Minister of Labor and Social Prevention, Javiera Blanco, who was present in Bachelet's first Presidency as Deputy Minister of Carabineros (Police) and actively participated in the campaign for the second election, was director of the Citizen Peace Foundation and faced several crises, for example, a workers' strike; The Minister of Social Development, Fernanda Villegas, a member of the Socialist Party, who was part of Bachelet's campaign in Citizenship and Networks, was questioned by the cabinet due to her political management style that did not leave a mark on her portfolio.

The Minister of the National Women's Service, Claudia Pascual, director of the Communist Party and member of the council for the commune of Santiago, was part of the President's campaign as the head of the women's area and managed the public policy for Chilean women; The Minister of Sports, Natalia Riffo, who studied Psychology and assumed the position in 2013 when it was created by former President Sebastián Piñera, but was considered by the public opinion one of the worst ministers during Bachelet's presidency; the Minister of Mining, Aurora Williams, former ministerial secretary of Anto-fagasta, whose one of her main objectives was to manage improvements in the administration of mining resources in Chile.

The Minister of Health, Helia Molina, a medical specialist, managed the public health policy with emphasis on the elderly; the Minister of Housing and Urbanism, Paulina Saball, a professional from the Catholic University, from 2006 to 2010 served as Deputy Minister of Housing in the first term of the President, was characterized by her support for the victims of the earthquake of 2015; the Minister of the Council for Culture and the Arts, Claudia Barattini, worked in the direction of the Fundación Teatral San- tiago a Mil (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean [ECLAC], 2015); according to the Chilean press, Barattini's management was ineffective due to the lack of dialogue.

The ratio of 9 women ministers and 14 men was related to Law 20.840 of 2015, which sought to change a binominal electoral system for a proportional one. In particular, it sought the possibility of gaining female representation in Parliament. The basic idea of the law was that women should elect and have a say in acts that directly affected them (Ríos Tobar, 2006). The specific content of the legislation stated that no political party could present lists of candidates where one gender exceeded 70% of those eligible, under penalty of the list being invalidated. However, the mechanism is temporarily applied in parliamentary elections (ECLAC, 2015). Apart from the above characteristics, the law offered a series of guarantees for the incorporation of women into candidacies.

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In order to encourage the participation of women as candidates in elections, the parties were offered US$ 20,500 for each woman elected and each deputy could charge a reinstatement for each vote she obtained. In turn, said law mentioned that parties with such resources obtained would have to encourage women's participation in politics (ECLAC, 2015).

Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (Argentina, 2007-2015)

This president was democratically elected on October 28, 2007 in the Republic of Argentina and took office as the first woman to succeed her husband. Among her first acts as president, she created four ministries and came to the rescue of Aerolíneas Argentinas, for which the State acquired the majority of its shares.

In March 2011, Fernandez de Kirchner sought presidential reelection and was re-elected on October 24 for an additional term in office (Ramirez Gelbes, 2012).

In the field of social rights, it provided nearly three and a half million children with social insurance. This monthly allowance made a payment to pregnant women with 12 or more weeks of gestation. One of the most controversial events that took place during Fernández de Kirchner's first term was the implementation of the equal marriage (7000 couples benefited) and gender identity laws ("Cristina Kirchner on Peronist Loyalty Day", 2016).

In the area of ministerial policy, Fernández de Kirchner's orientation, like that of her husband who preceded her, was from the beginning ideological and political pluralism. The selection criteria was based on the possibility of incorporating people of different political orientations into the cabinet. The inclusion of gender was not raised as a relevant issue, a fact that indicated the importance of the meritocratic criterion over gender. The average age of the ministers in this period was 55 years old (Salinas, 2015), i.e., an age at which a certain political trajectory focused on merit can be seen.

Although Fernández de Kirchner's policy was guided by the same guidelines as her husband's, i.e. political heterogeneity, her mandate gradually incorporated several women into her work team.

When he began his second term as President, continuity in the cabinet was his personal trademark. There were only changes in the Ministry of Economy and in the Chief of Staff. At the end of his two terms, four women passed through the various ministries. In summary, the women who held ministerial positions during the Fernández de Kirchner administration were the following: Nilda Garré, who was Minister of Security of the nation between 2006 and 2011, recovered the relations between Army and civil society through a clarification of acts of corruption during the dicta- dury; Débora Giorgi, Minister of Industry between 2008 and 2015, whose management was characterized by the growth of the textile and automotive industry; Alicia Kirchner, in charge of the Ministry of Social Development; and María Cecilia Rodríguez, appointed as Minister of Security from 2011 to 2014, was characterized by the increase of security devices in the Police and the Armed Forces.

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Fernández de Kirchner left the Casa Rosada with 16 ministerial posts (Salinas, 2015); although in her government the posts available for women remained low, it is important to mention that she tripled those of her husband's government. On the other hand, it was observed that she relativized the criterion of meritocracy by increasing the quota of women in the ministries, and that, by reducing the average age of appointed ministers, she gradually increased the participation of women in them.

Dilma Vana Rousseff (Brazil, 2010-2016)

She was the first female president in Brazil and was elected by the country on October 31, 2010, obtaining slightly more than half of the votes (55 %). Rousseff was reelected with 51 % of the vote on October 26, 2014. In both ballots, she beat men without large percentage advantages in their votes. However, her administration ended on May 12, 2016 when the Senate impeached her. Rousseff attributed this decision to a plot by her vice-president.

As for Rousseff's presidential cabinets, Brazil was characterized by the heterogeneity of political parties that occupied ministerial positions. Since Fernando Henrique Cardoso assumed executive power in 1991, after a period of military dictatorships and the subsequent political disorganization of the 1980s, the political strategy of the presidents was to govern through the formation of party coalitions that would support presidential decisions in political consensus, and that there would be political oversight of the president's various actions. In this sense, neither gender quota policies nor meritocracy were the orientations that per se marked the conformation of presidential cabinets. The election of ministers was organized to incorporate the largest number of political parties into the presidential coalitions (Da Silva, 2013).

With the arrival of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and after the reestablishment of democracy in Brazil, representatives of different political parties and ideologies were appointed, which was evident in the exercise of his two governments. During this period, Lula da Silva gained political popularity in Brazil and supporters from different political parties. The same pattern was evident in Rousseff's government when she created new ministerial positions such as the House of Women and the Ministry of Race. By 2013, ministerial quotas were distributed among 10 political parties (Da Silva, 2013). This fact showed that the criterion of political and ideological diversity was stronger, even in the Rousseff government.

The count of the ministers who occupied the ministerial house after the impeachment of the president in late 2016 allows verifying the preeminence of the coalition criterion over the gender criterion. It is significant that by 2016 there were no women in the ministerial cabinet and, when Rousseff was reelected, six female ministers were appointed.

Rousseff sought the inclusion of women in the government since before she became president, being chief of staff in Lula da Silva's term she formed the Women's Secretariat, which had ministerial status. He also founded the Ministry for Racial Equality, headed by the only woman of color in his cabinet, Nidia Lindo Gomes, who was entrusted with a bill to achieve a race quota, but the legislative initiative never came to light.

During her two terms in office, Rousseff had a total of 18 female ministers in her cabinet, the ministerial posts were

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The following were the two terms of office held by women: Erenice Guerra was head of the Civil House in 2010, she left office because of the scandal about her children and influence peddling; Izabella Teixeira was Minister of the Environment between 2010 and 2016, during her tenure a controversy broke out for being the minister who spent the most money on per diems during 2010; Marcia Lopes was Minister of Social Development du- rante 2010, she was characterized for investing during her appointment the largest amount of money, in relation to the other ministries of that period, in social works.

Nilcéia Freire was minister of the Special Secretariat for Women between 2004 and 2011, responsible for the organization of the first edition of the National Conference on Policies for Women; Ana de Holan-da was minister of Culture between 2010 and 2011, at the beginning of her administration she was criticized for modifying the guidelines of this ministry related to copyright protection; Eleonora Menicucci headed the Special Secretariat for Women between 2012 and 2015; in 2015, because of an administrative and ministerial reform, the Secretariat for Human Rights, the Secretariat for Racial Equality Promotion Policy and the Secretariat for Policies for Women were merged, giving rise to the Ministry of Women, Racial Equality and Human Rights.

Gleisi Hoffmann was minister of the Civil House between 2011 and 2014, during her tenure both the minister and the public opinion manifested her little experience to fulfill the objectives she originally set out; Ideli Salvatti was minister of Fisheries and Agriculture in 2011, working on increasing agricultural and fisheries production, and facilitating bureaucratic processes; Iriny Lopes was head of the Special Secretariat for Women between 2011 and 2012, her main objective was to decrease the inequality of women in Brazil; Kátia Abreu was minister of Agriculture in 2015; Luiza Bairros was Minister of Race between 2011 and 2014, during her tenure she created the Sistema Nacional de Promoção da Igualdade Racial (Sinapir); Maria do Rosário was Minister of Human Rights during 2011 and 2014, during whose tenure she proposed a law for an agrarian reform; Miriam Belchior was Minister of Planning between 2011 and 2014; Nilma Lino Gomes was Minister of Women in 2015, one of her objectives was to combat inequality through education; Tereza Campello was Minister of Development and Fight Against Hunger between 2011 and 2016, in 2014 she launched strong criticism to the Federal Audit Court for the report on the Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger.

This shows, once again, that in Brazil the coalition criterion prevailed during Rousseff's two terms in office. On the other hand, there was an interest in giving representativeness to the different sectors of society in order to incorporate their interests in the government's actions.

Comparative of governments and ministers

Compared as a whole, the ministerial cabinets of the presidents studied: Barrios Torres, Moscoso Rodríguez, Chinchilla Miranda, Bachelet, Fernández de Kirchner and Rousseff, present similarities and differences. The cabinets of the first two had purely economic goals, in line with the findings of Ruiz Acosta and Camargo Mayorga (2018) regarding the leaderships of these presidents, in addition to including security goals that were entrusted to the ministers given the particular circumstances of these countries.

The governments of Chinchilla Miranda and Bachelet, on the other hand, showed an approach oriented

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clearly by a policy of gender quotas, while in the cases of Brazil and Argentina the meritocratic and coalition government criteria prevailed. It is worth clarifying that, although Fernández de Kirchner followed her husband's guidelines in terms of the choice of ministers, which coincides with the leadership style that influenced her (Ruiz Acosta et al., 2019), during her term of office the positions occupied by women increased by three positions in relation to her husband. In addition, it was found that, in her government, as the age of ministers decreased, the participation of women in the cabinet increased.

In Argentina, it should not be ignored that gender quotas produced positive changes in the participation of women in legislative bodies, with variations of 30.5% for the Upper House and 9.4% for the Lower House (Inter-American Development Bank [IDB], 2008). In addition, with gender quotas, more women were presented as candidates in legislative elections, increasing the proportion of those elected not only for Argentina but also for Costa Rica (Schwindt-Bayer, 2009).

Another relevant finding is that in the ministries entrusted to women, it is not seen that they were entrusted with the foreign affairs portfolio, especially in populist governments such as many of those described, which, according to Fouquet and Brummer (2023), base their foreign policy on leaderships whose premise is distrust of others and excessive self-confidence. Thus, the presidents delegated men to this task, who, as Kroeber and Hüffelmann (2022) refer, have been in charge of ministries with more status, resources and visibility in the eyes of national and international public opinion, which increases their political capital.

Of the presidents, the one who at the end of her term had the highest proportion of women was Chinchi- lla Miranda, who aligned herself from the beginning of her term with the quota law in Costa Rica, which for Martínez-Córdoba et al. (2023) should go beyond compliance with rules of this type if it is considered that women "possess qualities that contribute to greater efficiency in the management of welfare services according to the political position they hold" (p. 284).

Table 1.
Participation of women in ministerial cabinets

President	Country	Cabinets ministerial to the end term of office	Total participation of the woman	Total percentage
Violeta Barrios Torres (1990-1997)	Nicaragua	10	1	10 %
Mireya Elisa Moscoso Rodríguez (1999-2004)	Panama	13	4	31 %
Laura Chinchilla Miranda (2010-2014)	Costa Rica	23	10	43 %
Michelle Bachelet (2006-2010 / 2014-2018)	Chile	23	9	39 %
Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2007-2015)	Argentina	16	4	25 %
Dilma Vana Rousseff (2010-2016)	Brazil	24	18	75 %

Source: Own elaboration.

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Table 1 shows that Barrios Torres had the lowest participation of women in the ministerial cabinet at the end of her government, which can be explained, in part, by the leadership that influenced her to come to power, which was that of her husband Pedro Chamorro, a conservative political leader (Ruiz Acosta et al., 2019). In this case, it can be understood how male leaderships reproduce patriarchal models and marginalize women's participation in government, along the same lines as Carrión-Yaguana et al. (2023), as occurred in Ecuador.

Finally, it was found that for the different presidents, few of their female ministers lasted until the end of the presidential term, and that more were replaced due to circumstances inherent to the exercise of their positions or for media reasons, which differs from Krauss and Kroeber (2021), who found that the durability of ministerial cabinets made up of women is greater if it is considered that they have a lower probability of early termination of the cabinets to which they belong.

Conclusions

In this article, the participation of women in the ministerial cabinets of six democratically elected women presidents in Latin America was described, from which it can be concluded that their participation was comparatively weak due to the preferences that continue to exist for male leadership, due to cultural and social barriers, which is independent of gender quotas.

In countries such as Argentina and Brazil, gender criteria began to be more relevant, as the meritocratic criterion ceased to be absolute, not only did they seek to integrate people who had the possibilities to compete in the allocation of jobs in the public sector, but citizens from different social sectors gained a greater number of possibilities to represent their own interests, including women.

In the six governments described above, ideological and political diversity proved to be a decisive guideline for the formation of the cabinets. These represented the political coalition that was formed to govern, so that the women ministers, like the men, had the mission of safeguarding the political capital of the president, while at the same time supporting the governmental actions of the Executive.

This bureaucratic sharing mechanism is explained by the experience acquired in the dictatorships that governed five of the six countries in the research. If it is considered that, by incorporating most of the civil interests in the governmental and political sphere, the imposition of an absolute point of view is made impossible (Da Silva, 2013).

Likewise, the composition of the cabinets showed how the governmental power elites were transformed in the six countries, reducing conservative political positions to give way to progressive governments (Díaz-Parra and Romano, 2018). This began in the 1990s, precisely when the first electoral victories of women presidents took place and when, according to ECLAC (2004), women gained social and economic participation in the region.

Hence, it can be concluded that in those countries where ideological plurality was greater, the elites

The political system was less "closed" to allowing women to govern. This clearly opened the cabinets to greater and greater participation of women in cabinet formation, as happened to other traditionally marginalized social groups, allowing them to have political representation.

Thus, future research should investigate gender quota laws in order to know how they have affected the composition of ministerial cabinets in the different countries that have adopted them. Likewise, it is worthwhile to delve into research on the way in which conservative political positions or positions contrary to women's demands and feminism in the region have affected women's participation in the political arena. Finally, answering the question of what led presidents to choose some women for some ministries and not for others is another way to give continuity to the findings of this work.

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Conflicts of interest

The investigators declare that there is no actual or potential interest (institutional, economic or personal) that could result in bias in the publication of this work.

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